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ROUSSEAU

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ROUSSEAU

BY

HENRY GREY GRAHAM

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PREFACE.

MATERIALS for a biography of Rousseau are ample among the minute, if not always trustworthy, personal details in his Confessions, Dialogues, Reveries, and correspondence, and in information which abounds in the literature of the most memoir-writing age of France. It is, however, not easy to discover the truth or to get an impartial statement regarding many disputed passages of Jean Jacques' life; for each contemporary writes either as an admirer, passionately to defend him, or as if he were a personal enemy, bitterly to attack him. He has quoted with approval a wise saying of Montesquieu, when the baron had a quarrel—"Listen neither to Père Tourne-mine nor to me when we speak of each other, for we are no longer friends." If this advice, however, were to be followed in the case of the author of 'Emile,' it would be impossible to learn very much about him, seeing that he quarrelled with almost every one who knew him best, and regarded as foes those who have told us most about him, and those about whom he has himself spoken most freely. I have not thought it necessary to burden the pages with references to every source from which facts have been gained; but

no student of Rousseau's writings can omit to own specially his obligations to the studies of St Marc Girardin, and the masterly work of Mr Morley. Some recent publications have thrown further light on the life of Rousseau, and of these I have made use. A *brochure*, edited by Professor E. Ritter ('La Famille de Jean Jacques: Documents inédits.' Geneva, 1878), supplies several details of family history, and corrects several errors in the earliest part of the 'Confessions,' which was written from memory not unaided by imagination. M. Albert Jansen's recent tractate ('J. J. Rousseau: Recherches Biographiques et Littéraires.' Berlin, 1882), traces with admirable care the history of the origin and composition of the 'Confessions,' which, having arisen out of sketches for his autobiography which Rousseau began at Motiers in 1763, under the title of *Mon Portrait*, were not finished till 1770. When David Hume and Jean Jacques had their deadly quarrel, the historian deposited the various letters connected with it in the Royal Society of Edinburgh (after they were declined by the British Museum), fearing lest Rousseau in his forthcoming Memoirs would accuse him of garbling them, or would himself give a false version of the dispute. Although J. Hill Burton has published most of the letters connected with Rousseau, there are still some gleanings to be got; and I thank the Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh for their kindness and courtesy in allowing me to examine the Hume Papers, so full of interest and literary importance. I only regret that the limited space at my disposal has forced me to make so limited a use of those valuable manuscripts.

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ROUSSEAU.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND ADVENTURES.

About 1550 there settled in Geneva, Didier Rousseau, who had been a bookseller in Paris, but who was obliged to leave his country owing to his Protestant views. In 1555 he was enrolled as a citizen of the town, and three generations of his descendants pass by, occupying the rank of tradesmen. Although not known to the world, they seem, however, not to have been quite unknown to the society of that little city of 20,000 people, with its keen Puritan eyes and its inquisitorial officials of the Consistory. Under date October 1699 [1] there may still be read the judgment of the council against Isaac Rousseau (father of Jean Jacques) and others for assault on some English officers as they passed along the street one night "without candles"—the prisoners to be severely censured, made to ask pardon,

[1] La Famille de Jean Jacques : Documents inédits, 1878.

and Rousseau (then nineteen years old) sentenced to pay twenty-five florins. A few years further on, and the curious, on turning now to the registry of the Consistory under August 1702, may find that daughters of Sieur David Rousseau (the grandfather of Jean Jacques) have been cited because of complaints that they have been seen playing cards on the Sunday evening near the door of their house; and then it is afterwards recorded that one daughter came forward and stated that they were not playing with cards, but only guessing fortunes, upon which she is ordered to appear before the pastor and elder of the district. Such are the meagre details that eager investigators have discovered of the family of the great writer of the eighteenth century.

On June 28, 1712, Jean Jacques Rousseau was born in Geneva. His father Isaac, of whose youth we have found one characteristic detail, was a watchmaker, and was also for some time a dancing-master. Soon after Jean Jacques' birth he lost his mother, Susanne, who was niece of Samuel Bernard, a Genevese minister. "I was born weak and sickly," he says; "I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes." An aunt nursed and tended the child with a care and tenderness which he never forgot; and neighbours and relations dealt kindly with the motherless lad. Often he sat beside his aunt watching her as she knitted, listening to her as she sang the simple songs that delighted him: and long years after, when he was an old sad man, he remembered lovingly and vividly the good woman—her little ways, the manner of her dress, the fashion of her hair, with the two black locks on her forehead; and as the old songs came to memory, the

tears filled his eyes, while he tried with feeble broken voice to sing them over again. His father was his chief companion—a frivolous, impulsive man, with an excitable disposition, a selfish nature, and a sentimental heart. His son, however, thought him possessed of every virtue, regarded him as "the best of fathers," and revered alike his principles, which were certainly very admirable, and his practice of them, which was singularly deficient. He seems to have neglected his elder son, who, after learning the trade of watchmaking with his father, disappeared after a scampish youth, and never was seen again. He never troubled himself to train his younger son, soon left him entirely to his relations, and finally to look after himself, keeping for his own use the money which Jean Jacques inherited from his mother. He taught his child, however, to read, and some romances belonging to his wife were the books they studied together. When supper was over they would sit together reading aloud by turns far into the night. Sometimes in their excitement the day had dawned, and the birds had begun to sing, before they were recalled to the world; and as they heard the twitter of the swallows, the father would say, "Let us be off to bed; why, I am more a child than yourself." In this close companionship during pensive moods, his father would often plaintively say, "Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother;" and his son would answer, "Yes, father, but then we shall cry." His father, who enjoyed being inconsolable, thereupon always wept. While the already too impulsiveand imaginative nature of Jean Jacques was in this way being dangerously fostered, —as he says, "feeling everything and knowing nothing,"

—the stock of romances was at last finished; and when winter came, a collection of books, which had belonged to his granduncle Bernard, was ransacked. There were Bossuet's 'Discourse on Universal History,' Fontenelle's 'Dialogues of the Dead,' Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' Le Sueur's 'History of the Church and Empire,' and above all, Plutarch's 'Lives,' which he continued to love when an old man. These books this boy of seven years old read aloud during the day, while his father was busy with his watches; and soon the feats of Brutus, Scævola, Agesilaus, and Juba, with the conversation of his father, full of patriotic sentiment, fired his heart, and produced, he says, "that republican spirit and love of liberty which made him impatient of restraint or servitude" all his life after. As he read his eyes would glisten at the heroic deeds; and he tells how "one day, as I related at table the adventure of Scævola, they were startled to see me advance and hold my hand over the chafing-dish to represent the action."

These pleasant days came to an abrupt conclusion. One day, in 1722, his father quarrelled with an officer in Geneva, and, according to Jean Jacques, he fled rather than compromise his honour and his sense of justice, because, contrary to the law, he was going to be put into the prison alone during the trial, instead of his accuser being put there also, as the law required. This is the filial view of the case, which, however, is hardly borne out by evidence,[1] which shows that he had assaulted this gentleman with his sword, and two days afterwards unheroically fled from the town to escape the consequences. For a month his return was awaited, and then

[1] La Famille de Jean Jacques, p. 25.

"Isaac Rousseau, *fils, maître de danse,*" was sentenced in his absence to ask pardon on his knees from God, from the Seignory, and from the said M. Gautier, for assault (*excès*) committed by him, and to three months' imprisonment, with fifty crowns' fine, and expenses. Isaac, however, never returned, but established himself at Nyon, where, three years afterwards, he married again and spent the rest of his life.

On the flight of his father, Jean Jacques was taken under the charge of his uncle Bernard, an engineer, who soon sent him and his own son to M. Lambercier, a minister, at Bossey, a village in the neighbourhood, where he learned Latin, and "that poor rubbish which accompanies it under the name of education." For two years he remained there; and during that time one or two incidents occurred which, slight as they seem, he believed to have influenced his whole character. One day he was accused unjustly of breaking the teeth of a comb, and notwithstanding all his protestations he was treated as guilty. Such a trouble most boys would feel deeply at the time, and forget soon after in the crowd of little cares and pleasures that occupy their minds. Not so, however, with Jean Jacques; and when he wrote nearly fifty years afterwards the story of his life, the injury, the shame, the sense of humiliation and injustice, remained as intense as on the day the charge was made; —as keen as on the night when the two cousins in their little bed embraced each other convulsively, and to relieve their passion sat up in the darkness and cried time after time as loud as they could, "*Carnifex! carnifex! carnifex!*" Speaking of the incident, he says:—

"I feel, in writing this, my pulse rise still: these moments will be always with me, although I were to live a hundred thousand years. This first experience of violence and injustice has remained so deeply graven on my mind, that every idea connected with it brings back my first emotion; and this feeling has taken such a hold upon me, that my heart fires at the sight or recital of any unjust act, whatever may be its object, and wheresoever it may be committed, as if I myself were the victim. When I read the cruelties of some ferocious tyrant or the cunning atrocities of some rogue of a priest, I could start off to stab the wretches, although I were to die a hundred deaths."

From that day he felt that the delightfulness of childhood had gone, and all its simple innocence was over. It seems absurd to attribute so great an effect to so slight a cause; but probably in such an excitable and morbidly acute nature as his, so quick to feel, so slow to forget, there is no great exaggeration in his words.

Six months after, in 1724, Jean Jacques was back in his uncle's house; and he fell under the immediate charge of Madame Bernard, an austere pietist, who made religion a business for herself, and certainly no unmitigated pleasure to others. He was treated kindly, however, and only a few months[1] passed by before his future profession was decided; and when he was thirteen years old, he was apprenticed to a notary, much against his will. He entered on his work with distaste, and he pursued it with increasing hatred, while his master's contempt for his apprentice increased in the same proportion. He called the boy stupid, taunted him that while his uncle had promised him

[1] Not "two or three years," as the Confessions say. — La Famille de Jean Jacques, p. 29.

a smart lad, he had only sent him an ass, and then Jean Jacques was sent ignominiously back as utterly incapable,—an opinion in which his fellow-clerks thoroughly acquiesced. Much humbled, he was content to become apprentice (April 26, 1725) to an engraver,—a coarse, violent man, who ill-treated the boy, and by his blows and his tyranny thoroughly stupefied and demoralised him. He pilfered, told lies, became cowardly and cunning, for terror of his employer had made him so. He liked the engraver's delicate art, but his life was miserable in a service he loathed under a master he hated. When he was sixteen years old (1728), one Sunday he was outside the city walls on a ramble with some companions. Twice before, on similar occasions, he had gone so far and stayed so long that the gates were shut upon him, and when he returned next day his master's reception seemed too cruel to bear repetition. This night the gates were shut earlier than usual, and as the lads were returning they heard the retreat sounded. With all his strength poor Jean Jacques ran as the drum beat, terror giving swiftness to his steps. In vain he cried with choking voice to the soldiers: when he was twenty paces from the gate the fatal drawbridge was raised. Years after he shuddered to think of his position, for he was in abject terror at the idea of facing his brutal master the next day. However, he made his determination never to return, and he bade farewell to his companions.

The horror of the evening gave way to delight in the morning, as Jean Jacques found himself free, with the world ready to open for him, and as he thought of a brilliant life before him with all the bright audacity of youth. For some days he wandered near the town,

lodging with peasants whom he knew, and one day he went to Confignon in Savoy. The priests of Savoy, in their intense Catholic fervour, were always in religious competition with ministers of Geneva, each party trying to save heretics from perdition, and to make proselytes to what each reckoned the only saving faith. Of these zealous priests none were more zealous than M. Pontverre, the Curé of Confignon. He received Jean Jacques warmly, gave him food to eat and orthodox arguments to digest, —for he saw in this Protestant lad excellent spoil from the enemy. "I was certainly more learned than M. Pontverre," says Rousseau, "but I was too good a guest to be a good theologian; and his Frangi wine, which seemed excellent, argued so triumphantly for him, that I should have blushed to shut the mouth of so good a host." Jean Jacques, therefore, listened with obsequious attention to the worthy father's exposition, professed himself deeply impressed by all that he said, and pretended to be exceedingly desirous to learn more about the Catholic faith. The result of the interview was that, with the priest's parting words—"God calls you"—ringing in his ears, Jean Jacques was sent to Annecy, to be placed under the orthodox care of Madame de Warens, who should help him to enter the true Church. He walked away with a sinking heart, expecting to be relegated to the instruction of some old pietist, who, having so great a reputation for good works, could have none whatever for good looks. To his surprise he found that Madame de Warens was a lovely young lady, who, with a charming smile, took the letter of introduction from his trembling hand. "Child," said she, in a voice that made every nerve thrill, "you are very young to be

thus wandering about. Go indoors, bid them give you breakfast, and I'll speak with you after Mass." Now he felt certain that a "religion preached by such missionaries could not fail to lead to paradise."

What was he now to do? He did not know his own trade, and even if he did, there was no scope to exercise it. At dinner some one gave advice, which he pronounced as "coming direct from heaven," but which Jean Jacques afterwards thought, to judge from the results, came from the opposite quarter. This advice was, that the lad should go to Turin and enter a hospice for catechumens, where he would be sustained temporally and spiritually till he entered the fold of the Church. This suggestion was adopted, much to Rousseau's disgust at first, and in a few days he started off. Jean Jacques' imaginative heart was soon elated at the prospect of seeing the world. "I walked with light steps," he says; "young desires, enchanting hope, brilliant projects, filled my soul. Every object seemed to insure some approaching happiness. I fancied in the houses rustic festivals; in the meadows madcap sports; upon the trees delicious fruits; under the shades voluptuous interviews; on the mountains pails of milk and cream; a charming idleness, peace, simplicity, the pleasure of going without knowing where." After some days' travelling on foot he reached Turin, and was received into the hospice. The huge gate with iron bars clanged behind him, and he discovered himself amongst companions certainly not congenial to a soul so fresh as his. He found, in fact, four or five scoundrels as his fellow-catechumens. These swarthy blackguards went from monastery to monastery in Spain and Italy, calling themselves Jews or Moors,

and pretending at each place to be new zealous converts, in order to get food and lodging; and in the hospice they alternated the holy instructions from the priests with foul vice and vile talk amongst themselves in their rooms. Jean Jacques was put through a course of tuition; and, taking advantage of his previous knowledge and reading, especially of Le Sueur's 'History,' he gravely quoted the Fathers, and argued each point with his instructor in mock solemnity and fervour, but judiciously always allowed himself to be convinced at the proper time. At the end of nine days—though he says it was a month—he was ready to profess his conversion, and was led in procession to the church of St John to make solemn abjuration of his heresy. Dressed in a grey robe, he walked with one man before and another behind him, each bearing a brass basin on which he clinked with a key, to call charitable spectators to put in alms for the glory of God and the help of the poor convert. Having been baptised, and admitted into the bosom of the Church, he was sent to the hospital gate, presented with about twenty francs, which the collection produced, and recommended to be a good Christian; after which he was wished good speed, the door was closed, and he was left alone on the streets of Turin. It is impossible to pity the lad who was thus cast adrift after a course of hypocrisy, and who, instead of an easy future won by the good favour of priests, found himself reduced to sleep on the pavement.

However, he professes not to have felt crushed, but to have been filled with delight at his regained freedom, —with a great city to see, with hosts of people who would soon recognise his talent, and with an inexhaustible

treasure of twenty francs in his pocket. He found a lodging in the house of a woman who gave accommodation to servants out of place at a sou a night. She, her family of six children, and the lodgers, slept in the same room; she was dirty, rough, swore like a carter, but she was kind-hearted and honest. Having nothing to do, Rousseau wandered about the streets visiting the sights, and every morning listening to the music in the royal chapel; but he found that although his money went, his appetite remained. In vain he went from shop to shop, offering to engrave ciphers and arms on plate. But one day he saw through a window a pretty young woman in a shop, and he went in to offer his work. Madame Basile took pity on him, and gave him employment, for which he was paid in food and clothing; while Rousseau on his side did his best to make himself agreeable to her. This went on till the husband, who had been from home, returned, and finding this foreign lad about the place, very properly turned him out of doors with scanty ceremony. The worthy lodging-keeper, however, found for Rousseau the situation of lackey to Madame de Vercellis, a lady of position, but three months afterwards his mistress died, and he was dismissed with thirty livres in his pocket and his livery on his back. An incident occurred before he left, which he relates in his 'Confessions' with sincere shame. He stole a ribbon, and it having been found upon him, he accused a fellow-servant, a simple, modest girl, of having given it to him. Marion was brought before the household and confronted with her accuser, who boldly maintained his story. She remained at first speechless, casting a sad look on him, while he with effrontery repeated the false charge which she had

denied. "Ah, Rousseau, I believed you were good-hearted; you have made me very unhappy, but I would not be in your place," she cried, bursting into tears. Writing forty years after, he owns—

"This cruel recollection troubles me at times, and overwhelms me so that in my sleepless nights I see this poor girl come to reproach me with my crime as if it were yesterday. . . . At the sight of Marion my heart was torn, but the presence of so many persons was stronger than the compunction. I feared the punishment little, I feared only the shame,—I feared it more than death, more than crime, more than anything. I saw only the horror of being detected, and declared publicly, in my own presence, thief, liar, calumniator."

Bitter as his remorse was, however, he tells, with the marvellous frankness of a man possessed of remarkable self-unrighteousness, how he has since consoled himself with the selfish reflection that the agony of this sin preserved him through life from any criminal act, and that his aversion to lying proceeded from his having been guilty of so black and dastardly a falsehood. Whether his consequent aversion to falsehoods kept him from uttering them, the reader will soon be able to judge.

Rousseau was now without a situation, and he went back to his dirty lodgings with the old landlady, where he remained for six weeks, spending the tedious days in prowling about the streets. At length another place was found for him, and he entered the service of the Comte de Gouvon as footman, although this time he was spared the indignity of a livery. He had, however, to wait at table, and do the customary menial work. With his chronic infatuation, he fell in love with his master's daughter, and showed his dumb adoration by

waiting upon her with assiduous attention. If her servant quitted her chair for an instant, Jean Jacques at once darted into his place: he would post himself opposite to her to observe everything she did and needed, and to spy the moments to change her plate. He believed he had made a deep impression on her heart, although not a look or word did she vouchsafe the amorous lackey; and as he hovered about her room one day, she dismissed him sharply from the chamber. His talents and education could not, however, be overlooked by the household, and the Abbé de Gouvon, his master's son, who was a man of letters, taught him some Latin, used him as a secretary, and made him a fair Italian scholar. His attention, while it served to improve Jean Jacques as a scholar, spoiled him as a footman; and while he was made a favourite of the family, he became an object of dislike and jealousy to his fellow-servants. He became careless, he neglected his work, and being in vain reprimanded time after time, he was at last one day taken by the shoulders, ignominiously shoved out of his master's house, and the door was shut upon him.

This new freedom, instead of filling Rousseau with dismay, filled him with delight, for he had formed the desire of travelling with a Genevese lad in Turin back to Switzerland. He and his friend Bâcle had conceived a brilliant plan for paying their way. The Abbé de Gouvon had given him a pretty toy fountain, and the lads imagined that by making a show of it at work to the peasants, they would get good cheer and shelter at the villages. They set out with gay spirits and magnificent expectations, but they soon found their fountain was not

a pecuniary success and it began to bore them; so when one fine day it broke, they marched on merrily with hands as light as their hearts. At length they reached Annecy, and with beating heart and trembling limbs Rousseau knocked at Madame de Warens's door. He was kindly received by the hospitable widow as he kneeled at her feet and kissed her hand rapturously, and soon settled in this house as his home.

Madame de Warens was a widow of about twenty-eight. She was rather short and stout, but with a well-made figure, features more beautiful in expression than in form, with soft blue eyes, a dazzling complexion, exquisite ash-coloured hair arranged with piquant carelessness, a winning smile, and a bust, hands, and arms, which seemed to Rousseau matchless for beauty. The Baron de Warens had been much older than herself, but she did not live with him, and had taken up her residence at Evian, on Lake Leman. On one occasion, when the King of Sardinia was there, she allowed herself to be converted to Catholicism; and pleased at this conversion, and probably also personally pleased with so amiable a convert, the king settled on her a pension of 2000 francs. Although Madame de Warens had changed her religion, in reality she had very little religion to change; and although Rousseau calls her a true Catholic, she was much such a Catholic as his Savoyard vicar, who held a sentimental deism and solemnly conformed to Romish worship. While she was still under her husband's roof a tutor had basely undermined her principles, and used only too successful sophistry to prove that morality was a mere form, and that womanly virtue need only be kept in appearance. Her volatile mind and passionless

heart adopted these notions to her cost. Yet although without any principle, she was full of good impulses; she was kindly, good-tempered, and charitable. She was a clever woman, with philosophical views of the broadest type, which she had abundant talent to understand and to support; but all her ability did not prevent her trustful nature from being the dupe of knaves, who took advantage of her crotchets to further their own ends. Having inherited from her father a fancy for alchemy, she spent much of her time, and still more of her money, on drugs, furnaces, chemicals, and on charlatans who, without a crown in their own pockets, professed their power of making boundless fortunes for other people.

In the old house at Annecy, where Jean Jacques in 1731 was installed, he was supremely happy in his nondescript position of pupil, servant, and lover. His work consisted in transcribing receipts, sorting herbs which Claude Anet the steward had collected, and in pounding drugs. Numbers of people came to the house—beggars and visitors—and all were treated with hospitality, to Rousseau's intense disgust; for he wished to monopolise the whole of his mistress's attention, and he would murmur petulantly when they came, and curse them after they went, till the tears of laughter rolled down Madame de Warens's cheeks. Jean Jacques was only at rest when she was near; and though he was silent and slow in society, with her he never wearied, never ceased talking. To read with her the 'Spectator' or Voltaire's 'Henriade,' to listen while she sang or played upon the harpsichord in the evenings, to walk among the woods or sit in the arbour,—she calling him "child," he calling her "mamma,"—was perfect happiness.

This enchanting life could not last for ever. Rousseau was eighteen, and must earn his living. M. d'Aubonne, a relation of Madame de Warens, coming to see her one day, was asked to give his opinion upon Rousseau; and he came to the unflattering conclusion that the lad was of limited intelligence and very ignorant, and that he was only fit to become a village priest. Yet even that humble post required more Latin than he possessed, and in consequence he was sent to the Seminary of St Lazare, feeling as if driven from paradise. His progress here was exceedingly slow. His talents made a very poor impression upon his teachers, and after they had used every effort, he was with languid praise pronounced a good enough lad, but not even fit to become a priest.

After he returned home again, Jean Jacques proved far more proficient at his flute than at his classics, and passed most of the winter with M. le Maître, choirmaster of the cathedral, who lived close by. This man was a good musician and boon companion, who was constantly drinking over his work in his room, and constantly quarrelling when he left it. Having taken offence at some slight from the precentor of the cathedral, he resolved to depart secretly; and it was arranged that Jean Jacques should accompany him to Lyons. After a vagabond journey, during which the travellers got hospitality chiefly by their false representations, they arrived at Lyons. As they passed along a street Le Maître fell down in an epileptic fit. Rousseau called for help, gave the name of their inn, and while the crowd was busy assisting the poor man, and no one was looking, he ran off, leaving his friend

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to his fate. At the time he felt no compunction: he persuaded himself he could have done no more for him; but long years after he remembered with remorse his baseness. "It is not," he says, "when a base act is just done that it torments us,—it is when long after it is recalled; for the memory of it cannot be extinguished." And when he finishes the wretched story in his 'Confessions,' where he does public penance for his sins in after-years, he writes with a sigh of relief—"Thank heaven, I have ended the painful avowal. If there remained any more such to make, I would abandon the work I have begun."

At the time his only feeling was that of eagerness to get back to Annecy; but when he did so, he found to his dismay that Madame de Warens had left home, and no one knew where she was or when she would return. In his necessity he shared a lodging with one Venture, a Frenchman, who in the previous year had come to Annecy in poverty, and having captivated the people with his music, his manners, his conversation, now lived on their hospitality. After some time, a housemaid of Madame de Warens, having heard nothing of her vagrant mistress, proposed to Rousseau to accompany her to her father's house at Friburg, whither the two trudged on foot. As they passed through Nyon, Jean Jacques visited his father. They embraced warmly, they wept profusely together, and then they parted, after scanty pressing to stay from his stepmother, who was naturally suspicious of his equivocal companionship. On reaching Friburg, and getting a still colder reception from the girl's father, he went on his vague way without a sou to pay food or lodging. When he came to Lausanne

he thought he would imitate the clever knavish Venture —pretending to be able to teach music, which he was quite incapable of doing, and to have come from Paris, where he had never been. Boldly he entered an inn, was received without suspicion; and telling his plausible tale, the good-natured landlord allowed him to stay, and advised him to live on one meal a-day, and pay for it when he got pupils. "Why is it that, having found so many good people in my youth, I find so few in my old age?" asks Rousseau, in his 'Confessions.' "Is the race exhausted? No; but the class in which I need to seek them to-day is no longer the same as that in which I found them then. Amongst the people, where great passions speak only at intervals, the feelings of nature make themselves more often heard. In the higher ranks they are absolutely stifled, and under the mask of feeling it is only interest or vanity that speaks." In this way he scorns the insensibility of the rich, who, at the time at which he writes, were full of kindness to him, and who would have loaded him with favours, which he rudely rejected; and while he praises the simple kindness of the poor, he forgets that at the very time of which he speaks he was imposing upon their goodness with his lies.

When Jean Jacques thus started in life as a teacher of music, he was almost entirely ignorant of the art, and announced himself as a composer while scarcely capable of writing down an air. Infatuated by the example of his French friend, who called himself Venture de Villeneuve, Rousseau made an anagram of his name, and called himself Vaussore de Villeneuve. Being presented to M. de Treytorens, who gave concerts, he

offered to compose a piece for one of his entertainments. For sixteen days the *soi-disant* Vaussore de Villeneuve worked audaciously—drawing out the parts and arranging them with as much assurance as if this was to be a masterpiece of harmony; and, to crown the whole, put at the end of it a pretty popular air as his own composition, "as boldly as if he had been speaking to the inhabitants of the moon." Rousseau with humorous candour describes the rehearsal,—how, after beating gravely with his roll of paper, the music began —a discordant mass of sound:—

"The musicians choked with laughter; the audience opened wide their eyes, and wished they could have shut their ears. I had the pertinacity to go on perspiring, it is true, great drops, but retained by shame, planted there and not daring to fly. For my consolation I heard round me the assistants saying in each other's ears, or rather in mine, 'It is intolerable!' another, 'What outrageous music!' another, 'What a devil of a row!' . . . But what put everybody in good humour was the minuet. Hardly had they begun to play before I heard from all parts bursts of laughter. Every one congratulated me on my pretty taste in song,—assured me that this minuet would make me everywhere spoken of, and that I should be universally famous. I need not paint my anguish, nor need I own that I richly deserved it."

To one of the players who came to see him next day he opened his burdened heart, and told his story in the strictest confidence—the result being, of course, that before the evening everybody in Lausanne knew who and what he was. It is not wonderful that he only got one or two pupils, and that they knew far more than himself; for he could not read an air at sight, or follow the execution, to see if it was rightly played,

of the very piece he had himself composed. By dint of teaching, however, he made a little advance in the knowledge of music; and going to Neuchâtel soon after, he got a few pupils, and so managed to live.

It was in the spring of 1731[1] that one day he entered an inn at Boudry, and there saw a man with a great beard, a violet Greek dress, a fur cap, with a dignified air; who made himself barely intelligible to the landlord by signs; and who spoke in a broken language, which no one but Jean Jacques understood. He was an archimandrite of Jerusalem, getting subscriptions for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre—a project which had been advocated and collected for at various times in Switzerland before, but for which he was not very well equipped, seeing that he knew hardly any tongue except Greek and Italian. Rousseau was so needy that he readily accepted the proposal to become this man's secretary and interpreter. He and Father Athanasius Paulus went from town to town for some weeks, until he came to Soleure, where another change took place in his fortunes. He accompanied the priest to the house of the French ambassador, who conceived an immediate interest in him, questioned him, learned all his story, and took him under his care. A short time afterwards Rousseau was sent off to Paris in attendance upon a young officer. He left the fresh, sweet country, with its woods, its streams, and the songs of birds, which were life to his heart, with regret, and entered Paris with disgust and bitter disappointment at its filthy, narrow streets, its dirty houses, its poverty, its rough carters, its screeching

1 Rousseau places this incident in 1732, but see La Famille de Jean Jacques, p. 29.

street cries. Was this the famed Paris of whose glories his boyish thoughts were full! of whose streets of marble palaces he had often dreamt! No doubt, the reception Rousseau got from those to whom he was recommended compensated him to some degree; and the exquisite manners, the delicate compliments, the agreeable courtesies of society, so different from the rough honesty of rural ways, deluded this vagabond Swiss into the notion that he had made a deep impression on the heart of every lady he met, and that his fortune was almost secured. Quickly, however, he discovered that, though the French mean well, they do not mean much, and that though "while speaking to you they are full of you, they forget your existence the moment you are out of sight."

Rousseau soon tired of Paris, and still sooner of his master, and hearing that Madame de Warens had gone home, he left Paris to return to his beloved Annecy. With that buoyancy of spirits which always filled him, even when an old embittered man, whenever he breathed the country air, and enjoyed the country freedom in charming vagabondage, Jean Jacques rambled along, singing as he went, from village to village, from province to province, at his own glad will, full of day-dreams, drinking in pleasure from greenwood and meadow; watching the rustic sports, and listening to the birds upon the hedgerows with unwearying delight. He relates an incident which occurred in the course of his journey which vividly illustrates the state of the poor of France in the last century, and explains the fierce spirit which animated all his writings in their support. One day he lost his way, and, hungry and

tired, he entered a peasant's hut, where he asked for food.

"He offered me skimmed milk and coarse barley-bread, saying that it was all that he had. I drank the milk with delight, and ate the bread, straw and all; but that was not very restoring to a man exhausted with fatigue. This peasant, who examined me narrowly, judged of the truth of my story by my appetite. All at once, after having said that he saw I was a good honest young man, who had no intention of betraying him, he opened a little trap, descended, and returned in a moment with good brown bread, some very tempting ham, and a bottle of wine whose aspect rejoiced my heart more than all the rest: a thick omelet was added to this, and I made a dinner such as no other wayfarer had ever known. When the moment of payment came, his disquiet and his fears returned; he rejected the money with extraordinary uneasiness, and what made it ridiculous was, I could not imagine what he was afraid of. At last he pronounced, shuddering, these terrible words — 'clerk' and 'cellar-rats' (excisemen). He made me understand that he hid the wine because of the duties, and hid his bread because of the *taille*, and that he was a lost man if it should be discovered he was not starving. All that he told me on this subject, of which I had not the slightest idea [being Swiss], made upon me an ineffaceable impression. This was the origin of that unquenchable hatred which has grown in my heart ever since against those who vex and oppress an unfortunate people. This man, although well off, did not dare to eat of the bread he had gained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape ruin by displaying the same misery as that which reigned around him. I came out of his house as indignant as I was sad, deploring the fate of these beautiful countries on which nature has lavished gifts only to make them the prey of barbarous tax-gatherers."

The case with which Rousseau met was only too common in the last century in every province of France.

The more prosperous the wretched peasants seemed, the more heavily they were oppressed, and therefore they feared to show any signs of wellbeing. They would refuse the offers from their landlords to have tiles on their thatched huts, which let in wind and rain; their implements were uncouth and broken, their few cattle lean as themselves, their fields ill manured and hardly tilled; the slopes were left unplanted with vines, for the collectors took all their profits, and they would often empty their wine into the river, being unable to pay the dues. If they got a coat to cover their rags, that was sufficient ground for collectors exacting more *taille;* though they were starving, the lynx-eyed officials would detect and report the suspicious presence of two or three feathers of a fowl before their door, and the taxes thereupon were raised. In this condition of social oppression, the only way in which the poor could preserve anything was by appearing to have nothing.

Jean Jacques, meanwhile, went cheerily on his way, and during the chilly nights slept now in a hut, now in the open air, now in a wayside inn, with hardly a sou to pay his fare. He forgot all his cares as he travelled in the brightness of the sunny days, or as he dreamt of some plan for an impossible to-morrow, lying at night stretched upon the ground as tranquilly as on a bed of roses.

"I remember having passed one delicious night outside the town [of Lyons], in a road which went along the side of the Rhône or the Saône, I forget which. Some gardens, raised on a terrace, bordered the road on the opposite side. It had been a very hot day; the evening was charming: the dew moistened the parched grass; no wind, a still night; the air was fresh without being cold; the sun after setting had left in the sky some red vapours, the reflections of which made the

water rose colour; the trees on the terraces were crowded with nightingales that answered one to another. I walked in a sort of ecstasy, opening my senses and my heart to enjoyment, and sighing only with a little regret to enjoy all this alone. Absorbed in my sweet reverie, I prolonged my walk far into the night, without perceiving that I was weary. When I found it out at last, I lay down voluptuously on the shelf of a kind of niche or false doorway in the wall of the terrace. The canopy of my bed was formed by the tops of the trees; a nightingale was exactly over my head, and I fell asleep to his song. My sleep was sweet, my waking sweeter still. It was full day: my eyes opened upon the water, the grass, and the delightful landscape. I rose and shook myself. Hunger seized me, and I walked gaily towards the town, resolved to spend on a good breakfast the two pieces of money that were left to me. In high spirits I went singing along the way."

As he walked on merrily, some one accosted him, asking if he could copy music; and before an hour was over he was in the house of one M. Rolichon, an enthusiast, who set him to work, and gave him food and lodging, though he copied badly, and his work was spoilt by erasures, and full of blunders. In his new quarters he remained only a few days; and receiving a summons from Madame de Warens, who was now in Chambéry, he started off from Lyons to join her.

He arrived at Chambéry in the spring of 1732, and was received with open arms. He did not, however, here find the beauty of Annecy: there was no garden, no stream, no open country. The house was dark, in an alley rather than a street, with bad light, bad air, and dingy rooms. The household was a strange one. It consisted of the volatile hostess, Claude Anet, and Rousseau. Anet had been a peasant who had a know-

ledge of herbs, which made him useful in preparing her drugs; and he was a shrewd, reserved man of thirty, who made himself quietly essential, and acted at once as lover, servant, gardener, and herbalist. As the king had ordered a new survey of the country, Rousseau became a clerk in the office of the surveyor, where he got enough to live upon. He thought less of the rent books, however, than of the little concerts in Chambéry, where Madame de Warens and Father Caton, the Cordelier, sang; where Roche the dancing-master played the violin, and Abbé Palais accompanied on the harpsichord; while Rousseau himself with severe gravity, tempered by enthusiasm, acted as conductor. All this pleasure ruined him for work. He began to feel that his career lay in music, and in spite of all remonstrances he gave up his post at the registry, where five hours of hateful toil in a dirty room, close air, and with boorish clerks, made him eager to snatch at any prospect of freedom; and with improved qualifications he took up his old trade of teaching. He secured a few pupils; but he was really dependent on Madame de Warens, who admitted him into closer and more intimate relations than ever, though she varied her love-passages with speculations of the most unremunerative order. Her house was infested by speculators of every sort,—charlatans, bubble-makers in trade and science, who made her poorer every day, while professing their power of making her fortune. To add to this, Claude Anet died, and she had reason to miss the cautious steward, who had looked after her money and managed her household, where now debts and troubles daily increased. Jean Jacques, with the best intentions in the world, was unable to add to her means, and could

only by caresses comfort her for the loss of them. He began to feel, however, that he must really do something for himself; and as a first step towards that laudable purpose he spent 800 francs belonging to his deeply indebted mistress in books and music, and spent vainly days in practising and nights in copying Rameau's compositions. But the temptation of a concert, a walk, a supper, a romance to read, a play to see, sent his admirable resolutions to the winds. He had the strongest wish to save his mistress from ruin; yet could not but feel that he might as well have the money as the knaves that deluded her, and accordingly with little scruple lived and travelled at her cost.

In this way three or four very peaceful, very happy, very idle years passed by. In the summer of 1736 Rousseau had a dangerous illness, and the lingering weakness produced by it rendered the fresh country air a necessity to him. Madame de Warens fixed upon Charmettes, a house not far from Chambéry, but as "retired as if it had been a hundred miles away." It lay beautifully in a valley formed by two hills, through which ran a stream beneath the shadows of the trees. In front of the *châlet*, with its red-tiled roof, was a terraced garden, an orchard laden with fruit above, and a vineyard below, while opposite lay a little chestnut wood. Jean Jacques was delighted. "Oh," said he, embracing Madame de Warens, "this is the abode of happiness and innocence; if we do not find them here, it will be in vain to seek them elsewhere." Here they remained the summer, returning in winter to the warmer but duller shelter of Chambéry. Rousseau never quitted his beloved Charmettes without turning again and again,

and kissing the ground and trees. "Then began," he says, "the short happiness of my life; there passed the peaceful but rapid moments which have given me the right to say that I have lived. I rose with the sun and I was happy; I walked and I was happy; I saw *maman* and was happy; I left her and was happy; I roamed about the woods and the hills, and wandered through the valleys; I read, I was idle, I worked in the garden, I gathered the fruit, I helped in the management, and happiness followed me everywhere." Then he describes in detail the routine of daily pleasures. He rose before the sun every morning, and, walking through the vineyard towards Chambéry, listened to the distant bells in the morning air, and prayed,—"not by a vain stammering of the lips, but a sincere elevation of the heart, to the author of lovely nature whose beauties were spread out before my eyes. I never like to pray in a room: it seems as if the walls and the little workmanship of man interposed between God and myself." As he drew near home, he watched to see if the shutters of "mamma's" room were open, and then ran to the house. Their breakfast and their morning chat over, Rousseau studied till dinner — Locke, Descartes, or Leibnitz, or the ponderous Puffendorf. At twelve he quitted his books, and till dinner was served worked in the garden, or visited the pigeons, which knew him so well that they would trustingly perch on his head and shoulders, while bees settled tamely on his hands or face without in any way hurting him. After dinner he devoted himself to idleness, a book that took his fancy, a walk, coffee with *maman* or friends in the arbour, enlivened, now by haymaking, now by the vintage. So passed the

happy days in Charmettes. His fine-strung nature was sensitive to all things tender: the far-off sound of bells, the cooing of the turtle-dove, all touched him to tears, he could not tell why. Fondly he loved this sweet idleness,—to bask in the sun or loiter in the shadows of the chestnuts, to gaze for hours on the lovely scenery or the drifting clouds, to listen to songs of birds or to the murmur of the stream over its pebbly bed, ever in delicious reverie and in simple enjoyment of the passing hour, with no thought, no care of the morrow.

Jean Jacques' studies here became for a while more definite if not more successful than heretofore. Some time previously in Chambéry, he had read Voltaire's 'Lettres Philosophiques,' which served greatly to open his mind to literary interests. He began to arrange his reading according to subjects, to classify it, and fix his studies in his unretentive and most unsystematic head. Concentration of mind, however, was a positive pain to him; his attention would wander into cloud-land after reading a few pages continuously of an author. He has described how, as he studied geometry, he went vainly hundreds of times over the same ground; and when he worked at the Latin 'Method' of Port Royal, as he learned one rule he forgot all the others.

It must be noted, nevertheless, that he had a curious fondness for exaggerating his defects of memory, and his little mental as well as moral weaknesses; and it is evident that his vagrant studies at Chambéry after all were not slight, and served him in good stead in after-years when writing his famous works. He even read theology, and the writings of Port Royal and the Oratoire made him half a Jansenist, and frightened him by their

sombre doctrine. He troubled his inquisitive mind with the everlasting problems of grace and free will, and with the still more practical question of personal salvation, while the terror of hell agitated him greatly. He asked himself, "What state am I in? Should I die this moment, shall I be damned?" According to the Jansenists, there was no doubt on the matter; but the decision of his conscience, and certainly his wishes, lay, as may be expected, quite the other way. He tells how—

"One day thinking on this sad subject, I occupied myself mechanically by throwing stones against the trunks of trees with my usual dexterity—that is to say, without touching one. All at once, in the midst of this fine exercise, I bethought myself of making it a kind of prognostic to calm my disquietude. I said to myself, I will throw this stone against the tree opposite: if I touch it, that will be a sign of salvation; if I miss, that will be a sign of damnation. As I said this, I threw a stone with trembling hand, and with a terrible beating of the heart, but so happily that it struck the middle of the tree, which was not a very difficult feat, seeing that I had chosen one very thick and very near. Since then I have never doubted of my salvation."

In this whimsical incident we may find a most characteristic instance of his lifelong propensity to form his convictions entirely upon his inclinations; although it may be questioned if most people have more rational grounds than Jean Jacques for many of the theological notions they fondly cherish.

Rousseau's health gave way again in 1737 or 1738, and having studied physiology quite enough to make him fancy that he had ailments of the direst order, he went to recover at Montpellier. Here a sentimental entangle-

ment detained him, notwithstanding which he returned in December to Chambéry, where Madame was in winter quarters, anticipating with beating heart the wonted reception from *maman*. "Ah, child! have you come back? have you had a pleasant journey?" were the cool words with which Madame de Warens greeted the ardent Jean Jacques, while beside her stood a young man evidently very much at home. This fellow, who had established himself in the hospitable house and still more hospitable heart of Madame de Warens, was a journeyman wig-maker called Vintzenried, son of the keeper of the Castle of Chillon. Rousseau describes him, with no more impartiality than we need expect from a rival, as a flat-souled, flat-faced youth—though well enough made, he candidly grants. The intruder was vain, idle, and extravagant, and took upon him the position of master, while Rousseau was left out in the cold. He endured this as long as he could, shut himself up with his books, or sighed and wept in the woods: but as he was unable to exclude Vintzenried from Madame de Warens's favour, or recover his old position, he resolved to go away. Fortunately an opportunity offered of settling himself at Lyons, where in 1740 he became tutor to the sons of M. de Mably, the elder brother of the famous Condillac, and of the Abbé whose philosophical works coincided in so many respects with Rousseau's after-writings. Never was a man more out of his element, or less fitted to be a preceptor. He was impatient and passionate. "When things went well," as he says, "I was an angel; when they went wrong, I was a devil." He made use of three means to influence the boys, which were all equally unsuccessful—sentiment, reason, and passion; but he found

his tears were wasted, his reasons were generally refuted, and when he fell into a rage he only delighted his pupils, "who became philosophers as I became a child." So the future educationalist had to confess, "Everything I undertook failed, because all I did to effect my purpose was exactly what I ought not to have done." His happiest moments were spent in his room with locked doors, where he sat drinking M. de Mably's Arbois wine and munching confectionery in delightful seclusion. But still he yearned after Charmettes, especially as he was unable to make Madame de Mably reciprocate the furtive affection he was willing to transfer to her. The bygone life of love, the old house with its garden, its fragrant meadows, its orchard, its delightful idleness, attracted him beyond his power of resistance, and he finally yielded to the temptation. He was received with kindness; but, alas! Charmettes seemed no longer the dear old place. His vain and insolent rival was still supreme, letting everything go to ruin, and leading his mistress to poverty. Jean Jacques kept himself to his little room, composing music, writing a comedy, trying to occupy his thoughts with a new system by which musical notes should be marked by figures. He began at length to fancy that he could make his fortune by this fine scheme, and determined to make the venture. Leaving his heart at Charmettes, he set out for Paris with magnificent projects in his head, with a comedy and musical system in his pocket, and with fifteen louis in his purse.

He was now twenty-nine, having spent nearly nine years in the society of Madame de Warens, in the strange mixture of vagabondism and sentimentality, of

fine feelings and shabby actions, of high moral enthusiasm and unsavoury dependence, which make up the story of his early life. Few stories of an idle and unvictorious youth have attained such fame; but it is with a sense of relief that we accompany Rousseau into the wider world of Paris, where, at all events, the confusing mixture of sophistication and innocence, vice and virtue, exist no more.

CHAPTER II.

IN PARIS.

HAVING passed through Lyons, where he saw the Duc de Richelieu, who promised him his favour, and having got from M. de Mably letters of introduction to some men of letters, Rousseau arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1741. He lodged in the squalid Hôtel St Quentin, in the narrow dirty Rue des Cordiers, near the Luxemburg. His recommendations proved useful to him; but although he says "a young man who arrives in Paris with a tolerable figure, and announces himself by his talents, is sure to be well received," he soon felt that he could not live on compliments, or even by dining occasionally at houses where his awkward manners made the company smile and servants sneer. While Rousseau was living in poverty in his garret, in his shabby inn, and trying in vain to make a livelihood by teaching music, some of the greatest figures in French literature were to be found in Paris. Voltaire, then at the height of his fame, was living with Madame du Châtelet, either at Cirey or in the splendid mansion, Hôtel Lambert, which she had just bought, working in his luxurious library overlooking the Seine, and receiving hosts of admiring guests,

while Jean Jacques was wandering hungrily in the boulevards. Fontenelle, now nearly ninety years old, chatty, cheery, and heartless, was trotting about from *salon* to *salon*, where he sat in the easiest chair in the warmest corner, finding his deafness no disadvantage in the ceaseless talk around him. D'Alembert, five years younger than Rousseau, was already famous, but still found a home with the good glazier's widow, who had brought him up as a foundling, in the Rue Michel le Comte; though, strange to say, he was not seldom to be found in the brilliant drawing-room of Madame de Tencin, whose illegitimate son he was, and whom she had abandoned as an infant. Montesquieu was preparing for the greatest of his works, 'L'Esprit des Lois,' which appeared seven years later. Buffon, now thirty-four years old, came to Paris every year to visit the Jardin du Roi, with reluctance leaving his study in Montbar, where he had begun the great work on natural history which occupied him for forty years. Diderot, about Rousseau's own age, had been seven years in Paris, but was still living a ragged Bohemian life in his garret, eking out a living by teaching or writing as bookseller's hack, glad when able to spend a few sous at the Café de la Régence, and watch with envy the players at chess.

Rousseau was impatient to have his musical system tried, and in August 1742 he at last got his memoir read before the Academy of Sciences. It was duly complimented, and a committee of three gentlemen—who, after they rejected his invention, he felt convinced knew nothing about it—was appointed to examine the system. The author considered the great merit of his scheme to consist in the superseding of transpositions and keys, so

that the same piece was noted and transposed at will by means of the change of a single letter placed at the head of the air. He was astonished at the ease with which they answered his unready arguments, and with a few sonorous phrases refuted his statements without understanding his theory.

The Academy granted a certificate which, though full of compliments, implied to the author's disgust that the scheme was neither useful nor new, and Rousseau was left to the barren reflection that "all these learned men who know so many things, really know so little that each should only judge of his own craft." Though his project was a failure, and his account of it, which he published with difficulty, brought neither money nor fame, his acquaintance with men of letters was considerably increased. Fontenelle and Marivaux endeavoured to give him literary advice; Diderot, allied to him by a common poverty and common musical taste, discussed with him his schemes. All this time he had little to do in Paris, except walk about in the Luxemburg gardens, committing to memory passages from the poets which he always forgot next morning; playing chess at a *café* on the evenings he did not go to the theatre; and although never making the slightest progress, never losing the conviction, even while he played chess with the great Philidor, that he would one day surpass every one, and gain high distinction thereby in society. Meanwhile, as he was dreaming of an impossible future, he was rapidly sinking into beggary; but fortunately an eccentric friend, Father Castel, albeit he was somewhat mad, showed some wisdom in recommending that since men

did not believe in his musical system, he should now see if ladies, to whom the kindly priest had spoken of him, would not regard it with favour. He accordingly called on Madame de Beuzenval, who received him graciously, praised his plan, and asked him to dinner: he found, however, to his supreme disgust, that he was expected to dine with the servants, but a judicious whisper from the lady's daughter remedied this mistake. When he first arrived in town, his awkwardness was so great that when his plate was tendered to him, instead of taking it he dabbed his fork into the contents to extract modestly the smallest pieces, whereupon the company must have smothered their laughter, and the servants tittered behind the chairs. Soon, however, he became used to society, and was often at Madame Dupin's, "where few people save dukes, ambassadors, and blue ribbons were to be met," or such leaders in letters and science as Buffon, Fontenelle, and Montesquieu. He visited here incessantly, dined twice or thrice a-week, and with his wonted infatuation he had the audacity even to make love to the cold and beautiful Madame Dupin. No wonder the letter he wrote to her was returned with a rebuke which "froze his blood," and it was quietly suggested to him that his visits were a great deal too frequent.

After an unsuccessful expedition to Venice, as secretary (at the rate of £50 a-year) to M. Montaigu, the French ambassador there, Rousseau returned to Paris, improved at least in music, and resumed his lodging in the dingy little Hôtel St Quentin, where he found amongst his equivocal companions coarse Gascon *abbés* out of pocket, and Irish priests out of place. At this

inn there was a girl of about twenty-two years old, employed by the landlady as a seamstress, whom Rousseau met at dinner, and whom he championed amidst the brutal raillery of the mean society in which he lived, and from the noisy rudeness of the vulgar landlady. His pity for her grew into affection. He liked the unprotected girl who looked simple because she was dull, and, modestly said nothing because she had really nothing to say. He removed Thérèse le Vasseur from this unwholesome place as his companion, and the union thus formed lasted, amidst all troubles and miseries, throughout his life. He paints Thérèse as estimable, grateful, and modest. Previous events did not exactly justify this praise, nor did her after-history sustain the character. She did much to mar the happiness of a man whom she was able neither to understand, to appreciate, nor to guide: she was exceedingly stupid, she never read, and she could hardly write, her surviving letters being marvels of cacography.[1] For a whole month Rousseau tried in vain to teach her the hours on a sun-dial,—she could never distinguish one numeral from another; she could not name the months of the year in order; she could not count money, or learn the price of anything. She was quarrelsome, sly, deceitful, and coarse, greedy of money and gossip. But Rousseau saw none of her faults, excused her stupidity, and felt that she was a constant blessing to him.

[1] Here is a specimen of her letter-writing in 1762: "Mesiceuras ancor mieu re mies quan geu ceures o pres deu vous, e deu vous temoes tous la goies e latandres deu mon querque vous cones ces que getou gour e rus pour vous."—Streckeisen-Moultou: Rousseau, ses Amis et ses Ennemis, ii. 450. After Rousseau's death Thérèse signs her letters "fame deu gean ieacque rousseau."

Accordingly, Rousseau tells us "he lived with his Thérèse as agreeably as with the finest genius in the world." Of course there was no great disparity between them in social rank and tastes. He himself had sprung from the ranks, and had not sprung very far, and always retained his humble tastes. Rousseau preferred his comfort in a *café* or an inn, with its unceremonious talk, to the most brilliant conversation and finest Burgundy at Baron d'Holbach's table: he was far more at home dining with Pilleu the mason at Montmorency, than with even the simple-minded Marshal de Luxemburg. Nothing pleased him more than, in the society of Thérèse, to walk outside the city, where he "magnificently spent eight or ten sous at an ale-house;" or in the evening, in the recess of the window, to sit with her on chairs placed on a trunk, where they partook of their frugal supper and could enjoy the view of the neighbourhood from the commanding eminence of the fourth storey where they lodged, in the Rue de Grenelle.

"Who can describe," he says, "and how few can feel, the charm of these repasts, consisting of a quarter of a loaf, a few cherries, a bit of cheese, a half-pint of wine, which we drank between us? We sometimes remained in this position until midnight, and never thought of the hour unless informed by the old woman. But let us leave these details, which are either insipid or laughable. I have always said and felt that true enjoyment cannot be described."

This "old woman" was Thérèse's mother, a shopkeeper. She was a coarse, greedy harpy, whom Jean Jacques hated, and yet endured most patiently, though she disgusted him with wretched attempts at wit, wearied him with her scandal, and helped herself to

his money. Rousseau soon found that though his funds were decreasing, he had now seven or eight persons to support; for Madame le Vasseur brought her whole family from Orleans to Paris, and they clung like so many leeches to him. They suddenly manifested a tender affection for Thérèse, whom they had always ill-treated before, and got hold of her little earnings; they looked on Rousseau as excellent plunder; they got food and clothes, they borrowed and stole from him; and even the nieces pillaged Thérèse, and called Jean Jacques endearingly by the name of "uncle."

Rousseau, meanwhile, was busy working for the stage. He wrote, at the Duc de Richelieu's direction, alterations both in the music (which was by Rameau) and in the words of Voltaire's "Princesse de Navarre," in order to fit it for appearing, under the name of "Fêtes de Ramire," at Versailles. His comedy of "Narcisse" was accepted by the Théâtre des Italiens, but not performed; his "Muses Galantes," a musical piece, was rehearsed at the Opera-house, but he could not get it accepted, although it was performed privately with success at the house of Madame de la Poplinière, where old Rameau, the fashionable composer, vexed him by saying that most of the music was worthless, and by hinting that the only good part was stolen. He became literary secretary to Madame Dupin and her step-son, M. de Franceuil, at the rate of 900 francs, trudging home at night to his supper and his Thérèse in his shabby lodgings. This appointment was more advantageous from the society with which he was brought in contact, than from the salary. The leaders of the coterie he thus entered were the wives of farmers-general, whose wealth alone

would have carried them to social heights; and it is curious that a man like Rousseau, who never ceased denouncing the rich, and the iniquitous taxes to which these farmers-general owed their wealth, should himself have had as his best patrons the wives of these very men. Madame de la Poplinière, frail as she was fair, Madame Dupin, Madame d'Epinay, whose husbands farmed the taxes, were his best supporters, and through them he was introduced to those who had rank, or wit, or fortune. He had social qualities of his own, however, that justified the notice taken of him; he had rubbed off much of his Savoy awkwardness, and, though never ready, he knew what to say and how to pay a compliment. He made the acquaintance of Madame d'Epinay through Franceuil, who was then her lover, and he was often invited to her entertainments at Chevrette, near St Denis, where he sometimes acted, playing a part in his own comedy of the "Engagement Téméraire." Madame d'Epinay's first impression of him was that "he is given to pay compliments, yet he is not polite, or at least has not the air of being so. He seems ignorant of the ways of society, but it is easy to see that he is infinitely intelligent. He has a brown complexion, and eyes full of fire animate his face. When he has spoken, and as one looks at him, he is comely; but when one recalls his face, it is always plain. It is said that he is in bad health, which he is careful to conceal, from some motive of vanity. Evidently it is that which gives him occasionally a sullen air."[1] His original conversation, his unconventional ways, and his deferential manner, pleased her greatly,

[1] Madame d'Epinay's Mémoires, i. 175.

and he was often at Chevrette, where he must have been hailed as the freshest acquisition ever made to the artificial society of France. In Paris, his most intimate literary friend was Diderot, and they, together with Condillac, met once a-week at the Palais Royal, where they dined and discussed freely music, art, religion, and philosophy. The 'Dictionnaire Encyclopédique,' which was to have so remarkable a career, was at this time in preparation by Diderot and D'Alembert, and Rousseau accepted an offer to write the musical part. In three months he had his essay on Music finished, and got for it very slight remuneration.

His domestic cares were increasing apace. Thérèse gave birth to a child, and Jean Jacques resolved to send it to a foundling hospital. This idea had been suggested to him by the loose talk he had heard in an eating-house he frequented; and as other people had relieved their cares in this way, he did not see why he should not do the same. Without hesitation on his part, the child was deposited at the office of the hospital. Rousseau satisfied any scruples he might have felt by attaching a card with a cipher to the clothing of the infant, the duplicate being given to Thérèse, who bitterly felt this cruel resolution. Next year another child was born, and sent likewise to the hospital,—the cipher this time, however, being neglected. This happened in succession with five children, on each occasion to the intense grief of poor Thérèse, and without the slightest compunction on the part of Jean Jacques. Such conduct it is not easy for the most ingenious mind to excuse on any ground, and he himself, with all his sophistry, has failed to palliate such crimes against pure human instincts.

We read almost with disgust his letter in 1751 to Madame de Franceuil, in which cant seems set to eloquence. He urges that if his misery robbed him of the power of fulfilling so dear a duty, he deserved pity and not reproach; he had hard work to do to gain his bread, and how could he earn it if domestic troubles and disturbances left him no peace in his garret? Soon he would have been obliged to resort to patronage and intrigue, and give himself to infamies his soul abhorred. "No, madame; it were better for them to be orphans than to have a scoundrel for their father." If, in a foundling hospital, the children had no luxuries, they would have at least everything that was necessary; if they were not delicately bred as gentlemen, they would be trained to be healthy peasants—and it was better to be mechanics than authors. He blames the rich for depriving the poor like himself of the means of supporting their offspring; he pleads bitterly for commiseration on the ground of never having "tasted the sweetness of a father's embrace." Unfortunately, this pathetic plea is curiously like that of the French advocate who, pleading for mercy on his client who had murdered his parents, in forensic despair exclaimed, "Pity him, for he is an orphan!" Jean Jacques abandons his children, and cries, "Pity me, for I am childless!" Indeed, with his faculty for sublimating selfishness into sacrifice, he asserted many years afterwards that he would do the same again, as saving them from a destiny a thousand times worse. "Had I had less concern for what might become of them, not being in a situation to train children myself, I should have left them to their mother, who would

have spoiled them, and to her family, who would have made them monsters."[1] Stripped, however, of all sentimental phrases and of all pretence, the plain reasons seem to have been—he was poor and did not care to spoil his comfort by keeping them; he liked his own freedom, and did not wish to be hampered by having them; he was excitable, and did not want to be worried by rearing them. He therefore did what was most convenient for himself, and, as usual, laid the blame on others: he loved children much, but he loved his ease a great deal more; he enjoyed the luxury of affection, but, like his father, he would undergo no sacrifice for the object of it; wrong-doing could be made up for by easy remorse, and Rousseau greatly preferred the remorse to the trouble of doing right. This he himself admits: "When my duty and my heart were at variance, the former seldom got the victory. To act from duty in opposition to inclination I found impossible."[2]

[1] Rêveries, iv.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi.

CHAPTER III.

LITERARY SUCCESS.

In 1749 Diderot was a prisoner at Vincennes for publishing his 'Letter on the Blind'—a work which brought him punishment less for the atheistical views it taught than for a sneer it contained at the mistress of a Minister. One hot summer day Rousseau walked out from Paris to see his friend. As he strolled along he took out the 'Mercure de France' to read, and his eye fell upon the announcement that the Academy of Dijon proposed as subject for a prize essay the question—"Has the progress of the Arts and Sciences helped to corrupt or to purify morals?" "All at once," says Rousseau,[1] "I saw another world, and became another man." "In an instant I felt my head dazzled by a thousand lights; crowds of new ideas presented themselves at once with a force and confusion which threw me into inexpressible agitation. I felt my head seized with a giddiness like intoxication; a violent palpitation oppressed me. Unable to breathe walking, I lay down under one of the trees in the avenue and passed half an hour in such agitation, that on rising I saw all the front of my waist-

[1] Confessions, Bk. viii.

coat moist with my tears, which I had unconsciously shed upon it."[1] Reaching Vincennes in a state of great excitement, he told Diderot the cause of it, and how he had resolved to show that the corruption of society was due to its cultivation of arts and letters and sciences, showing him, at the same time, a passage he had written under the tree. His friend encouraged him to follow out the idea and compete for the prize. This is his own account of the matter: unfortunately another story[2] is told on the authority of Diderot by Marmontel, Morellet, and La Harpe, which differs widely from Rousseau's. According to this version, Jean Jacques went one day to consult Diderot about competing for the prize. "What side do you intend to take?" asked his friend. "I shall prove that the progress of art and science purify morals." "Ah, that is the bridge of asses!" exclaimed Diderot. "All ordinary talents will take that road, and you will find only commonplace ideas; take the other side, and you will make a great commotion."[3] This is one of those puzzling cases, where

[1] Second letter to Malesherbes.

[2] To which, however, Diderot himself gives little support in his writings, even when he is denouncing Jean Jacques as "a wretch" with all his vigour: "Lorsque la programme de l'Academie de Dijon parut, il vient me consulter sur le parti qu'il prendrait. 'Le parti que vous prendrez,' lui dis-je, 'c'est celui que personne ne prendra.' 'Vous avez raison,' me replique-t-il." — Essai sur les Règnes de Claude et de Neron: Œuvres, viii. 168. It is so far in Rousseau's favour that Grimm, ever the friend of Diderot, and hostile to Jean Jacques, in his Correspondence does not cast a doubt on Rousseau's originality.

[3] Abbé Morellet tells the story from Diderot's lips most circumstantially; and as the discrepancy is curious, we may quote what Diderot is reported to have said to Rousseau when he went to Vincennes and explained his ideas on the advantages of arts and sciences.

the best authorities are in hopeless opposition. Nothing is more decided than Rousseau's statement to Malesherbes made in 1762, yet it is not more decided than Diderot's own opposite account, which must have been told much earlier, for in 1760 we find Marmontel, at Les Délices, regaling Voltaire with the piquant story. That Diderot made suggestions, and that to him some passages were due which Rousseau lamented using, is all that is owned by the author; and certainly the views advocated in the Discourse are those most congenial to Jean Jacques' own character, and which he developed with remarkable intensity and evident sincerity, in all his after-writings. At the same time Diderot, though given to exaggeration, was not a man to say false and malicious things. In default of any better solution, therefore, we must suppose that both stories are one-sided, and that both friends were of opinion that to argue the paradoxical theory was the best course—Rousseau from sentiment, Diderot from ingenuity; and the more the author thought out his theory, the more profoundly convinced he became of its truth. Eagerly, when the subject fastened on his excited mind, Jean Jacques worked at it. He

"That is not what you should do," said Diderot; "there is nothing new, nothing piquant in that; it is the bridge of asses. Take the other side, and see what an immense field lies before you: all the abuses of society to note; all the evils which desolate it; all the sciences, arts, employed in commerce, in war,—so many sources of destruction and of misery to the greatest part of men. Printing, the compass, gunpowder, the working of mines, all so many advances in human knowledge, and so many causes of calamity. Do you not see all the advantage you will have in taking this for your subject?" —Mémoires de Morellet, i. 116. We must own that we should have more confidence in the Abbé if he did not profess to remember so much.

devoted his many sleepless nights to turning and re-turning his periods "with incredible pains;" but before he was dressed in the morning, the elevated ideas and admirable phrases disappeared, and he could not remember one. He then thought of getting the services of Madame le Vasseur, who lighted his fire in the mornings; and as he lay in bed, he dictated to the old woman what he had composed during the night.

Bold and original as the idea was to write an essay for an Academy in condemnation of the arts and sciences which it was instituted to further, it was still more bold and original on the part of such an Academy to reward an author for the literary power with which he censured literature, and condemned science, art, and academies themselves. In the Discourse, in which he has said he imitated the literary style of Diderot, he seems to have found an outlet for his pent-up social animosities: an obscure writer, he could speak bitterly of those whose names were on every lip; an unscientific man, he could scorn those whose systems of philosophy were filling the world with interest, and whose theories gave occasion for endless debate; poor, he scoffed at wealth and its luxury; unpolished, he mocked at the insincerity and affectation of fashionable life; inexpert and slow of wit, he rebuked the pertness and nimble talk of refined society. He has measured the literary value of his essay when he says, that though full of heat and force, it is devoid of logic and order, and that of all his writings it is the feeblest in reasoning and poorest in harmony—"for the art of writing is not learnt at once." Indeed the side it adopts is that which a clever youth in a debating society would take to show his ingenuity, and

then vote against in order to show his good sense. But what invests the Discourse with interest, is the fact that it contains the germ of the doctrine of all his after-writings, and reveals the whole character of the man, with all his violence against hereditary customs and social distinctions and restraints. The theory, no doubt, is a paradox; but then so was the man himself.

He sees purity and honesty only in that golden age when science and letters were unknown, and when men lived in primeval simplicity and ignorance; and asserts that in a state of civilisation, and especially in the society of France, no man appears as he really is. "Suspicions, distrust, fears, coldness, reserve, hatred, treachery, hide themselves under this uniform and perfidious veil of politeness—under this urbanity so much vaunted, which we owe to the enlightenment of our age." Men have become debased as science and art have progressed; and dissoluteness and slavery have always been the punishment of man's efforts to rise from the ignorance in which divine wisdom has placed him. It was thus that Egypt, Greece, and Rome were corrupted, and by their corruption were ruined as nations. There were only a few races who preserved themselves from the contagion of useless knowledge, and were, in consequence, examples of virtue to the world,—such as Persia, Scythia, the ancient Germans, and above all, Sparta, famed for its happy ignorance and its wise laws—"a republic of demigods rather than of men, so much do their virtues seem superior to humanity." It is from mean sources that all philosophy arises.

"Astronomy is due to superstition; eloquence to ambition, falsehood, and flattery; geometry to avarice; physics to idle

curiosity; and moral philosophy, like all the others, to human pride. From vices they spring, by vices they are fostered; for what would become of arts if they were not cherished by luxury? of jurisprudence, if men were not unjust? of history, if there were no tyrants, no wars, no conspiracies?"

Useless as are their objects, the sciences are still more dangerous in their results. They are born of indolence, and in their turn they encourage it; they cause an irreparable waste of time, and each useless citizen can be only regarded as a pernicious man.

"Answer me, illustrious philosophers, you who know why bodies attract each other in a vacuum, what are, in planetary revolutions, the relations of areas traversed in equal times; what curves have conjugated points, and points of inflection and reflection; how man sees everything in God; how the body and the soul correspond, without communication, like two watches; what stars are inhabited: answer me, I say, you who have received such sublime knowledge, whether if you had never taught us these things we should have been less numerous, less formidable, less flourishing, worse governed, or more vicious? If the works of the most enlightened of our learned men and of our best citizens procure us so little that is useful, tell me what we ought to think of that crowd of obscure writers and idle *littérateurs* who waste the substance of the State? Idle, do I say? Would to God they really were so! Morals would then be more healthy, and society more peaceful. But those vain and useless declaimers on every side, armed with noxious paradoxes, sap the foundations of faith and annihilate virtue. They smile disdainfully at those old words, country and religion, and devote their talents and their philosophy to destroy and degrade all that is sacred among men. . . . What will men not do in their rage to be distinguished!"

Besides idleness, there is engendered by the arts and sciences in every age luxury, with consequent corruption

of taste, effeminacy of character, and degradation of morals. In education the young are taught almost everything except their duties; in literature, to gain a livelihood, men write everything except what is of value; in society, men and women have refinement of manners without charity, purity, or sincerity; in philosophy we have only quacks with various nostrums, each crying in the market-place, "Come to me,—there is no deception here," on whom contemporaries lavish esteem during life, or confer immortality after death. If our descendants knew all, and compared the honest works of pagan times with the shameful modern works perpetuated through the art of printing, "they would lift up their hands to heaven and say, in very bitterness of heart, 'Almighty God, who holdest in Thy hands the spirits of men, deliver us from the enlightenment and fatal arts of our fathers, and give us the ignorance, innocence, and poverty which alone can make us happy, and which are precious in Thy sight.'"

Such is the invective with which, amidst his eloquent sophistry, he assailed society. It might be expected that on his own premises we should burn our books, cease to educate our children, and return as soon as possible to that primitive ignorance which was truly bliss; but Rousseau, as St Marc Girardin remarks, though he always begins his writings with a paradox, generally concludes with common-sense. He does not intend, after all, that society should carry out his argument to its logical results—abolish all libraries, close every university. By that course, he elsewhere explained, we should gain nothing; Europe would be replunged into barbarism, and the vices would remain, only with

ignorance added to them. "It is," he replies to Stanislaus of Poland, who wrote against his Discourse,—"it is with grief I pronounce a great and fatal truth; there is only one step from knowledge to ignorance, and the change from the one to the other is frequent amongst nations, but one has never seen a people once corrupted return to virtue. Leave, then, the sciences and arts to soften in some degree the men whom they have corrupted. The intelligence of the bad is less to be feared than their brutal stupidity." This Discourse, in denouncing literature, made the fame of Rousseau as a man of letters; and the almost insolent brilliancy with which he attacked social corruption, brought this adventurer-prophet to the height of social popularity. Diderot's expectation as to the result of the Discourse was more than fulfilled. "It takes," wrote Diderot, who got it published for him, "right above the clouds: never was such a success." It did not matter that he had insulted *salons* and *savants*, for he had not said a word against any individual, and people do not feel an indictment against a whole class. In the midst of their conventional and artificial life they found it refreshing to listen to this strange voice that spoke so vigorously, so freshly, and so boldly his jeremiad on the age: and his conduct soon furnished fresh reason for remark.

Up till the publication of the Discourse in 1750, Rousseau had been a sort of secretary under M. de Franceuil; and now his employer, who was made Receiver-General of Finance, offered him the post of cashier. Jean Jacques accepted the office, fulfilling the duties with extreme dislike and extreme difficulty (for it was utterly alien to his taste and capacity), until the anxiety of being once left

in temporary charge of 30,000 livres during M. de Franceuil's absence did much to bring on an illness which nearly proved fatal. He began to brood over his position, and to ask himself, "Is it possible to reconcile the severe principles I have adopted to a situation with which they have so little in common? How should I, the cash-keeper of a Receiver-General of Finance, preach poverty and disinterestedness?" Ill, and thinking he had not long to live, he therefore resolved to pass the remainder of his days in independence and poverty. Accordingly, he resigned his appointment; and though called a madman for his pains, he persisted in his resolution. He began to dress in accordance with his assumed poverty. He gave up laced clothes and white stockings, discarded the ample peruke for a round wig, laid aside his sword, and sold his watch, saying to himself with intense satisfaction, "Thank heaven, I shall no longer need to know the time." His linen, however, which had formed part of his outfit as secretary in Venice, remained; but this inconsistency was soon removed, for one Christmas eve, when all were from home, his garret was broken into and "forty-two of my shirts of very fine linen" were stolen—suspicion resting confidently on a blackguard brother of Thérèse as the thief.

He sought a livelihood now as a copier of music at ten sous a page; but society was determined he should not be independent. Now that he was famous, people were exceedingly ready to help him: they pestered him with presents which he did not want, and with invitations which he would not accept: nor did Thérèse and her mother help him in maintaining his proud independ-

ence. They cunningly took gifts and asked money from his admirers without his knowledge, though often he noticed mysterious confidential whisperings going on between them and his friends which made him wretched. He began to change his whole manner, and became rude and churlish; for, not knowing and not being able to acquire the tone and manners of society, he says, "I became sour and cynical from shame, and affected to despise the politeness which I knew not how to practise." Grimm says of him much the same, that "till the appearance of the Discourse he was addicted to paying compliments, polite, affected, with a conversation even honeyed, and tiresome from its elaborate turns. All at once he assumed the mantle of a cynic; but not being natural to the character, he went to excess. Yet in darting his sarcasms he always knew how to make exceptions in favour of those with whom he lived; and he preserved, especially with ladies, much of that affected refinement and art of making laboured compliments in spite of his brusque and cynical tone."[1] Marmontel, who was not a friendly critic, says his manner was at first obsequious and humble, while his eyes observed everything with attention full of suspicion.

Rousseau, notwithstanding his unsocial bearing, was constantly in society, where, however, amongst clever if superficial talkers, he was generally sullen and silent; for, as he has said, "I have always wit a quarter of an hour after everybody else."

Rarely has society been so social as in those days when Louis XV. was king. Never were *salons* so full of women of grace and men of talent, who cultivated the

[1] Grimm's Corresp. Lit., iii. 58.

fine art of conversation so highly that if they were ever tiresome it was in their fatiguing efforts to escape being dull. "A moral subject," says Rousseau, "could not be better discussed in a society of philosophers than in that of a pretty woman in Paris." Ladies gave forth with delightful confidence their opinions on everything on earth, and with clever doubt on everything above it; boudoir *abbés* took pains to prevent the world from supposing that their religious profession involved any sort of religious convictions; men of wit and fashion with most graceful manners and sadly graceless lives uttered their admirable epigrams and piquant stories, which might be too broad but which never were too long; men of science like D'Alembert and Buffon, men of letters like Marivaux and Marmontel, philosophers like Diderot and Voltaire, all spoke their best on what they knew the most. There was abundance of sentiment, but there was little feeling in that society suffering from "paralysis of the heart." They would weep readily over Richardson's 'Clarissa,' but only feel the worst misfortunes of their friends a subject of curiosity to-day and a bore to-morrow. In this heartless, restless, glittering society people must have something to do when whist and *trictrac* tired them; and fashions came and went with bewildering rapidity. To unravel (*tisonner*) is for some time the rage; and at every house we see a group of brilliantly dressed people with fluent tongues discussing every topic, and with nimble fingers unravelling trimmings, tearing up epaulets and dresses to pick out the gold and silver threads. A bag is produced on a table, a circle of ladies is formed, and they tear up a dress as quickly as a character to

shreds. All hands are busy till supper is announced at 10 o'clock; gentlemen join in the task, and often have the expensive honour of also supplying the material. In the circles which met in the houses of persons like Madame Dupin or the Comtesse de Boufflers, or still higher, the Duchesse de Luxemburg, none were so heartily welcomed as men of letters, and nothing was so readily received as their theories. The opinions of Voltaire sounded less audacious from dainty lips; the materialist views of Helvetius lost their grossness, and the economic theories of Quesnay lost their dulness, in the choice phrases which passed from high-bred dames and epigrammatic *abbés;* the democratic notions which lauded equality were echoed by aristocrats of the bluest blood; the volumes of Buffon lay on the toilet-table of ladies, who also crowded to the lectures of Nollet on electricity, or of Rouelle on chemistry. It is significant of the tone of talk, that Madame de Grafigny could say that Helvetius's 'De l'Esprit,' a work resolving all virtue to selfishness, was composed of "the sweepings of her *salon.*" To have celebrity was enough to gain entrance into the highest society, which asked about a man, not who was his father, but what had he done?

There were *salons* for every coterie, for every taste, and on every day. On Sunday and Wednesday Baron d'Holbach had his dinner-parties; on Monday Madame Geoffrin, "the nurse of philosophers," had men of art such as Vanloo and Boucher, and on Thursday men of letters and science—Thomas, Marivaux, Raynal, D'Alembert—at her table; on Tuesday Helvetius entertained; while on other nights one might go to Madame du Deffand, blind, spiteful, and witty (whom Rousseau cor-

dially hated), who for years did not discover to her rage that her clever companion Madlle. de Lespinasse nightly received her guests in her own little room, and stole the cream of the conversation, while Madame was being dressed to appear in her *salon* at 6 o'clock. There were not a few other women of brilliant talent "who violated all the common duties of life, and gave very pleasant little suppers." Less reserved parties met at Madlle. Quinault's, the actress, of whose evenings at home Madame d'Epinay gives us a curious glimpse. At her house we see everything discussed with startling freedom, especially after the servants have left the room, and the little niece is sent away after dessert; because, as Madlle. Quinault sagaciously remarks, "When one's elbows are on the table, one can talk whatever comes uppermost." The conversation passes on to consider the basis of morals and of religion, while sentiments are expressed (an *abbé* being characteristically the coarsest of all) which even shocked frank Madame d'Epinay, who felt the opinions "rather strong to be spoken in presence of ladies who respected themselves;" while at the atheistic remarks of St Lambert, Rousseau angrily threatened to leave. "One hour of conversation," says Madame d'Epinay, "opens one's ideas, and gives more satisfaction than almost all the books I have ever read."[1] It certainly opens one's eyes.

Baron d'Holbach, whose materialistic 'System of Nature' appeared in 1770, was one of the best of hosts. He had a good cook, and excellent wine, and invited the most able guests, who uttered freely every dangerous opinion round his table, where they complained with

[1] Madame d'Epinay's Mémoires, i. 220.

much freedom of language that they lived in a country where there was no freedom of speech. It was reckoned a proof of the popularity of the parties of Baron d'Holbach—the "*mâitre d'hôtel* of philosophers"—that guests who came at 2 o'clock to dinner stayed till 7 or 8 in the evening. Here were D'Alembert, pleasant and lively, discussing everything in his thin, shrill voice; and Raynal, most garrulous and inquisitive of *abbés*, boring friends in his dreadful provincial accent, and seeking ideas for his bold 'History of the Two Indies,' which in 1772 astonished the world, and formed with the Gospels and Rousseau's writings the favourite reading of Marat. Here were Grimm, the able literary correspondent for long years of kings, the most French of Germans, the most cool and clear-sighted of critics; and Abbé Galiani, secretary to the Neapolitan Embassy, dwarf, wit, and buffoon, who loved the society of Paris, which he fondly called the *Café de l'Europe.* Here were Diderot, as eager about the details of an iron foundry as about the comedies of Terence, vehemently absorbing the conversation, and always gesticulating, as he puts his hands excitedly on the knees of whomsoever he favours with his talk (even Catherine of Russia complained that her imperial knees got black and blue, and placed the table before her for safety); and Helvetius, the generous wealthy ex-farmer-general, who, though he had joined in the liberal encyclopedic movement in Paris, was hated by his peasants in the country, who broke his windows, ravaged his property, and forced him, when engaged in sport, to protect himself by a troop of armed gamekeepers. Here was found Rousseau, who, though he bluntly had refused to go to D'Holbach's

house, saying "You are too rich," afterwards went, and sullenly listened to the sceptical talk he hated, and sometimes played over to the party the airs and sang with inefficient voice the songs of the "Devin du Village." Besides society at private houses there was society at *cafés*. Rousseau often went to the Café de la Régence, the resort of philosophers and literary men, where D'Alembert and Diderot met almost every day, really to talk over their schemes, but ostensibly to play chess on that board where are the only "bishops" it was then safe to attack, and the only "kings" it was safe to check. He was to be seen also at the Café de Procope, opposite the Théâtre Français, where artists, actors, and dramatists assembled in the evenings, and where, after the theatre was closed, they discussed each new work and play. In such society, amongst such friends, Rousseau lived in Paris.

After two months' imprisonment Diderot got out of Vincennes, chiefly through the influence of booksellers who were anxious for the progress of the Encyclopedia, the first volume of which was ready to appear. This work, projected in 1745 by Diderot, and which, with the co-operation of D'Alembert, was occupying all his time, began in 1751 its famous career, giving the boldest views on philosophy, politics, and science, and presenting criticism which struck at the root of all the pernicious institutions and customs of France. The revolutionary spirit of the Encyclopedia, with its keen hatred of the privileges of the nobility, the monarchy, and the church, appears in every volume: it pervades an article on the Taxes, or on Toleration, reveals itself in a definition of the word "Journeyman," and lurks even in a paper on

"Anagrams." Rousseau, besides contributing an essay on music, also wrote in 1753 an article on Political Economy, which is full of his intense democratic feeling. Here we find no such discussions as we associate with this subject,—nothing on rent, or currency, or production. Instead of these matters we find the doctrines that the law must be the expression of the will of the people; that in order to have good citizens, children should be educated together by the State in "the midst of equality," and taught "the maxims of the general will;" that there should be no "privileged" classes, no extremes of poverty and wealth: that the taxes should be imposed, not on the poor, but on the rich; not on the necessities of life, but on luxuries; not on corn and salt, but on livery, equipages, mirrors, chandeliers, and mansions; not on the industrious classes, but on the idle professions, mountebanks, singers, and actors. By these means, Rousseau argues, the best of sumptuary laws would be formed, and there would soon be less inequality of fortune, fewer idle ranks in towns, and less desertion of the country by the rich.

"All the advantages of society, are they not for the powerful and the rich? All the lucrative posts, are they not filled by them alone? All the privileges, all the exemptions, are they not reserved for them? If a man of position robs his creditors or commits other acts of rascality, is he not sure of impunity? Are not all the blows he distributes, all the violences he commits, the very murders and assassinations of which he is guilty, hushed up and forgotten in a few months? But let this man himself be robbed, and the whole police set to work, and woe to the poor innocent man whom they suspect. If he has to pass a dangerous place, escorts scour the country. If a noise is made at his gate, at

a word all is silent. If the axle of his coach breaks, everybody runs to help him. If a carter crosses his path his attendants are ready to knock him down, while fifty decent pedestrians going on business might be crushed rather than a lazy rascal be stopped in his coach. All these attentions do not cost him a sou ; they are the rights which belong to the rich man. How different with the poor! The more he needs humanity, the more society refuses it to him. If there are *corvées* to make, recruits required, it is he who has the preference. He always bears, besides his own burdens, those from which his rich neighbour is exempt. . . . I think him a lost man if he has the misfortune to have an honest heart, a pretty daughter, and a powerful neighbour."

Such scenes as he here refers to he had himself often witnessed. A man of the people himself, who had seen their sufferings and experienced their kindness, having often shared their scanty food, and been sheltered in their wretched huts at nights, he well could sympathise with the poor. The peasantry in every province were impoverished and oppressed. They were wretched and emaciated, living in huts that had no windows, clad in rags, eating black bread, and drinking as a beverage water poured over husks. Yet these were the people who paid taxes from which the nobles and rich ecclesiastics were exempt. The *taille*, the *gabelle* or salt-tax, the tithes, the *seigneurial* dues, the wine-tax, the poll-tax, all crushed them; more than a half of their earnings was wrung from them by tax-gatherers ; a quarter of the year was taken in forced labour (*corvées*) on the highway, to keep roads smooth for the coaches of the rich ; their grain was devoured by swarming flocks of pigeons from the dovecots of their lord ; their fences and crops were destroyed by

deer and boars kept for the chase; their sons were taken from the fields and sent to the army, where they lived in company with the refuse of society, or deserted to increase the criminal class.

At the very time Rousseau wrote his essay there was famine in nearly every province of France, as indeed there had been constantly throughout the whole century, "the people eating grass like sheep and dying like flies." Meanwhile the *noblesse* lived in ease, hearing with tranquillity of riots and outrages, of famishing crowds in the far-off provinces, which were becoming more barren, less cultivated than in the middle ages. Some men were warm-hearted enough to pity such widespread, deep-seated misery, and were cool-headed enough to see to what a terrible end it all tended, and what a dreadful retribution would overtake society. "When the people no longer fear anything they are everything," wrote D'Argenson. He saw that the materials were combustible. "A disturbance," he wrote in 1751, at the time Rousseau was thinking the same,—"a disturbance may give place to a revolt, and the revolt to a complete revolution, when real tribunes of the people may be elected, and the king and his Ministers be despoiled of their excessive power to do harm." While the poor were despoiled the *noblesse* were privileged under this "spendthrift anarchy" of Louis XV., and while a populace famished, favourites were loaded at their expense with pensions and places—from royal mistresses and needy aristocrats, who received millions, down to men like that M. Ducrot, who, Camille Desmoulins said, "received a pension of 1700 livres for his services as hairdresser to Mademoiselle d'Artois, who died at three years old, before

she had any hair." It is not wonderful that a nature like Rousseau's should be stirred by all these iniquities. His heart was fierce against a selfish aristocracy. One day he said to Madame d'Epinay: "The hope of another life makes me endure the atrocities which are committed in cold blood by the great, whose happiness is not troubled by them, and who, from caprice or for frivolous amusement, cause the despair and misery of many millions of men whom they should render happy. I am not of a ferocious nature, but when I see there is no justice in this world for these monsters, I please myself by thinking there is a hell for them."

Rousseau was busy during 1753 denouncing literature, and constantly writing, scoffing at the fashionable world, and constantly in society. This year he achieved a great success by his operatic piece, the "Devin du Village," which was first played at Fontainebleau, and for this performance he got 100 louis. There were present in the eager theatre the king and queen and all their Court, Louis XV. sitting beside Madame de Pompadour. The author, with unshaven beard, ill-trimmed wig, and poor attire, listened to the remarks of spectators round him with inexpressible delight; and as lady-lips murmured, "This is charming!" "This is ravishing!" the heart of Jean Jacques beat wildly, and he fain would have caught with his lips the tears of joy which fell from his eyes. That evening he was commanded to appear before the king next day, with the implied certainty of gaining a pension. Upon this tremors of shyness and fear overcame him at the thought; for "how could he accept a pension without forfeiting his boasted independence?" Accordingly he

suddenly disappeared from Court next morning on plea of ill-health, and gained the anger of Diderot, and general censure for his foolish and churlish conduct. "The Village Sorcerer," when played in Paris, was exceedingly successful; its bright, fresh, unconventional airs caught the popular ear. Madame de Pompadour herself played the part of Colin at Bellevue, and the king, "with the worst voice in his kingdom," sang all day long—

"J'ai perdu mon serviteur,
J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur;
Colin me délaisse."

The lively airs delighted society, which was not sorry to have a little change even from the operas of Rameau and Lulli which had so long charmed them; while, under the sharp teaching of Jean Jacques, the orchestra for once ceased to be noisy. Horace Walpole, in Paris, writing in 1765, says: "The French opera which I have heard to-night disgusted me as much as ever, the more so for being followed by the 'Devin du Village,' which shows that they can sing without cracking the drum of one's ear." Musical taste, however, has its caprices, and a time came when the public tired of the once delightful ballad airs. The last time the piece was performed was in 1823, when it was hissed; and a periwig having been flung on the stage, it was laughed and yawned out of fame. With us it lingers still in the only too familiar air called "Rousseau's Dream," which is an inaccurate reproduction of a pantomime tune in the opera.

Rousseau was not so successful with his little comedy "Narcisse," which he had written at Charmettes. It

was played anonymously at the Théâtre Français, and was received indifferently, while he professes to have been so weary of it that he could hardly sit out the representation. Going across the street to the Café de Procope, when it was over, he found others as weary as himself discussing it, and he exclaimed, "The piece is a failure, and it deserved to fail. It is by Rousseau of Geneva, and I am that Rousseau!"

He was soon involved in eager controversy. The previous year an Italian operatic company had come to Paris, and performed the works of Pergolesi and other foreign composers. In a short while Parisians were in hot discussion as to the relative merits of Italian and French music. Society was divided into two hostile parties, and the rival sets took their station in different parts of the Opera-house, one under the queen's box, the other under the king's, whence they were called *le coin de la reine*, and *le coin du roi*. For a long time not a little of the operatic music, most of the orchestral performances, and the whole style of singing, had struck some foreigners as by no means charming; and we find Gray the poet, writing in 1739 from Paris, laughing at "the mewing and frightful yellings of the singers," "the cracked voices trilling divisions of two notes and a half accompanied by an orchestra of hum-strums." At the present juncture Grimm issued a witty *brochure* in favour of the Italians; and now Rousseau, who perhaps knew more about Italian music than any other man in France, published his scathing "Letter on French Music" on the same side, adding enormously to the excitement. Bluntly he sums up:—

"I believe that I have shown that there is neither measure

nor melody in France, because its language is not susceptible of it; that the French song is a continued braying; that the harmony of it is brutal; that the French airs are not airs; that the French recitative is not recitative. Whence I conclude that the French have no music, and cannot have any; or that, if they have, so much the worse for them."

The quarrel between Parliament and clergy was at this time at its height; Parliament had just been exiled, the social ferment was general, and everything tended towards insurrection, as Rousseau says, yet "when my pamphlet appeared, from that moment every other quarrel was forgotten: the perilous state of French music was the only thing with which the public was engaged, and the insurrection was against myself." The excitement was immense in Parisian society. His letter drew forth innumerable replies; he fully expected to be banished; the indignant orchestra of the opera, which resented his drilling of them when rehearsing his "Devin du Village," burned him in effigy. "It is not surprising," said Jean Jacques, quietly, "that they should now burn me, since they have so long tortured me."

Though the controversy left as results an increased taste for Italian music, and a softer style of execution of the music of France, some years after, Goldoni the dramatist was present one night at the opera in Paris, with its beautiful scenery and ballet and its still noisy music, and when asked what he thought of it, he could only reply, laughing, "It is paradise for the eyes, and hell for the ears."

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOURSE ON INEQUALITY.

In this year, 1753, the Academy of Dijon announced as the subject of a prize essay, "What is the Origin of Inequality among Men; and is it authorised by Natural Law?" and Rousseau was encouraged by his former success to try again. To think over the matter, he went for some days to St Germain with Thérèse. The weather was beautiful; and wandering in the woods for long hours, he thought out his work. There, he says, "I sought for and found the image of the primitive ages, of which I boldly traced the history; I confounded the miserable falsehoods of men, and comparing the artificial man with the man of nature, I dared to show them, in their pretended improvement, the real source of their miseries." The essay did not gain the prize, but, when published in 1754, added to the fame of Jean Jacques in society, which were discovering in the Genevese music-teacher, copyist, and composer, a master of French prose, of striking eloquence and daring independence. The most refined society of Europe read the powerful pages, which told them they were hopelessly degenerated from the savage state, with as little resent-

ment and as much pleasure as the English public of our day read the sombre pages of Carlyle, which inform them, in contemptuous statistics, that they are so many millions—"mostly fools." As we read the writings of Rousseau, so bitter against the rich, the great, the learned, and the brilliant, amongst whom he mingled, and remember his own inability to join with ease and vivacity in their company, we are led almost to suspect that by his animosity, he was avenging himself on society for his incapacity to be social. Would he have hated the great so much, if, like Marmontel and Voltaire, he had felt at home with them? It would be interesting to speculate how much the great revolutionary movement — which owes so much to Rousseau's violent teaching—would have been changed if he had had more ease of manner, and more alertness of wit in society, in the glittering circles of Paris, which he hated chiefly because he feared them.

In his Discourse on Inequality, Rousseau condemns the social state as the source of the corruption of mankind, and of all the hateful inequalities of fortune and condition; and in opposition to the vicious state of civilisation, he turns in praise to the innocent state of the primitive man. The "natural state," as described by Rousseau, was not the enlightened "golden age" of which poets since Hesiod had sung, with melodious inaccuracy, and which Pope had a few years before pictured in his "Essay on Man," declaring that in piety and purity "the state of nature was the reign of God." On the contrary, the primitive man whom he admires is a being without intelligence, religion, or language, and with the mere physical desires of a

brute. He pictures him sleeping under trees or in dens, learning how to get food and safety by imitating the beasts, with no signs save gestures and cries, mating with a female as do the wild animals, and, like them, "not able to recognise his own offspring," who leave the mother when old enough to do without her. In fact, at a lower state even than what anthropologists call the "stone age," Rousseau sees the true golden age, because then, he maintains, men were more healthy, more free and innocent, than the civilised man. He even suggests "that the man should be honoured who first taught the Oroonoko Indians the use of bandages, which they apply to the temples of their children, and which secures them at least some degree of their imbecility and original happiness." Rousseau's perverse doctrine is a curious parody of theological dogma. Equally with his countryman Calvin, he sees in the depravity of man the result of a "fall" from primitive innocence; but while the theologian looked on man in an original state as endowed with intelligence, and made in the image of God, the theorist looks back with regret on man in an original state as endowed with stupidity, and made in the image of a brute.

By long stages, which Rousseau details with much minuteness and great ingenuity, but by pure conjecture, language was formed, industries grew, family life sprang up, and those processes took place which "made man bad by making him social." Chief of these is the institution of property—dire source of misery and inequality. The argument here is based on the passage in Pascal's 'Thoughts:' "'This dog is mine,' said these poor children; 'this is my place in the sun.' Here is the

beginning and image of the usurpation of the whole earth." In a similar way Rousseau argues,—forgetting, however, that the simple notion of property must have been formed by the first child, instead of lying dormant for long ages, as he supposes: "The first who, having enclosed a piece of ground, began to think of saying, 'This is mine,' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of society. What crimes, what wars and murders, what miseries and horrors would have been spared the human race by him who, seizing the stakes and filling up the ditch, had cried to his fellows, 'Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits are for all, and the earth belongs to none.'"

The happiest stage of all, in the opinion of Rousseau, is that half-way between the indolence of the first ages and the petulant activity of modern selfishness,—that period when men in savage life had settled abodes, were content with their mud huts, their stone hatchets, their dress of wild beasts' skins, and ornaments of feathers and shells; and when they "restricted themselves to work which each could do for himself." The example of the modern savages, to whom he attributes qualities of humanity and sincerity lacking in society, confirms him in the notion that this was the "true youth of the world," and that all progress since has led to "the perfection of the man and the decrepitude of the race." In lauding thus the condition of the savage, it must be remembered he only followed the practice of his age, which idealised the barbarian, and endowed him with all imaginary virtues and simplicity. Poets and dramatists were constantly putting in the mouths of

Peruvians and Indians the noblest sentiments and the finest rhetoric. "Return to nature and the manners of Otaheite" is the toast proposed by St Lambert amidst applause at a supper-party; and theorists forgot that their "noble savage" was as unlike the bloodthirsty Dahoman and the filthy Hottentot as Watteau's dainty and bedimpled shepherdesses were unlike the rustic reality. We are told by the essayist how the moment one man had need of another, equality disappeared; how agriculture and working of metals were arts which ruined mankind; how the institution of property awakened knavery, jealousy, ambition, and strife, and caused the usurpations of the rich, and the thefts of the poor, and the wild passions of all. By precarious titles only could any possessions be held by the rich, or even by the industrious. They might say, "This is mine, for I built this wall; I gained this land by my own labour." "Who marked out the lines?" it may be replied; "and on what ground do you demand to be paid the price of labour which was never imposed upon you? Do you not know that thousands of your brothers perish or suffer from want of that of which you have too much, and that there is necessary a distinct consent of the whole race before you can appropriate any that is beyond your share of the common substance?"

"Pressed by necessity, the rich, to defend themselves, conceived the most ingenious plan which ever entered the human mind—that of employing on their own behalf the very forces which attacked them, and of turning their enemies into defenders. . . . 'Unite with us,' they said to the poor, 'to secure the weak from oppression, to restrain the ambitious,

to assure to each the possession that belongs to him. . . . In a word, instead of turning our strength against each other, let us place ourselves together, all under one supreme power which governs us according to wise laws, which defends all members of the association, repels common enemies, and preserves us in everlasting concord.' All hasten under the yoke in order to secure their freedom. . . . Such was the origin of society and of laws, which, for the benefit of a few ambitious men, subjected henceforth all mankind to labour, to servitude and misery."

We have here the idea which lies at the root of communism; the principle which is condensed in the sentence of Brissot: "La propriété exclusive est un vol dans la nature," which was repeated by Proudhon in his favourite maxim—"property is theft." With eloquent theorising, which takes with the writer the place of historical knowledge, Rousseau traces the supposed order in which, from democracy to despotism, forms of government change, as men become more enslaved, as society becomes more insincere, selfish, and corrupt, until despotism rears its hideous head, devouring all that is good, and destined to overthrow finally all laws and people. With these significant words the Discourse ends: "It is manifestly contrary to the law of nature, however defined, that a child should command an old man; that an imbecile should lead a wise man; that a handful of people should abound with superfluities, while a famishing multitude is without even necessities."

These final words were repeated with terrible intensity of purpose forty years later in the revolutionary clubs of Paris, and in the publications which daily stirred the hates and hopes of the mob; they ring out again in the fierce incitements of Marat, in 1792, to the hungry

crowds: "The heir to the throne has no right to dine when you lack bread. Assemble yourselves in troops, present yourselves at the National Assembly, and demand that at once they assign subsistence on the national goods. If they refuse, unite in an army, divide the lands and wealth of the wretches who have buried their gold to reduce you by famine to submit to the yoke." Although Morelly, in the year after Rousseau wrote, in his 'Code of Nature,' argued also that vices spring from private property, and the Abbé de Mably years later also maintained that landed property was the source of unequal fortunes and of the vices of the rich and the misery of the poor, it was the brilliant rhetoric of Rousseau, and not the argument of these more consistent socialist writers, which caught the attention of the age.

Though the author spoke so wildly in his Discourse, he proved himself able to speak measuredly in argument with opponents; and in the controversy roused by his treatise he met assailants with great adroitness. When it was argued against him that a social state was really the natural state, being the issue of man's constitution, and consequently the result of the laws of God, he replied [1] that disease is natural also, and therefore equally in accordance with divine will; but you do not blame a man who objects to disease, and tries to arrest decay. "Do not forget that society is natural to mankind as decrepitude is to man; that arts, laws, and governments are necessary to races as crutches to the old; and the state of society being the extreme term at which men can arrive either sooner or later, it is not useless to show them the danger of going too quickly, and the miseries of a condi-

[1] Lettre à Philopolis (Bonnet).

tion which they mistake for perfection." But nowhere in his writings does he show how this tide of inequality can be stemmed; and he himself could evince no return to primitive simplicity except the unfortunate point of "not being able to recognise his own children." Amidst the controversy and commotion stirred by his Discourse, Rousseau received a letter of characteristic compliment from Voltaire in return for a copy of the work. "No one," he wrote, "has ever employed so much intellect in trying to make us beasts. It makes one long to walk on four paws when one reads your book. However, as I have for sixty years lost the habit of doing so, unfortunately it is impossible to learn again. I leave that pleasure for others more worthy of it than you or I."

In June 1754 Rousseau set out for Geneva with Thérèse, glad, he says, to be rid for a little while of the uncongenial atmosphere of Paris. He found so little openness of heart and frankness in the intercourse even of his friends, that he sighed after an abode in the country. "The cabals of men of letters, the want of candour in their books, and the air of importance they gave themselves in the world, were odious to me." On his way to Geneva, he went out of his course to see again Madame de Warens. Thirteen years had gone since last he had met her, and now he found her the mere wreck of her former self—miserable, old, poor, degraded. "I saw her," Jean Jacques exclaims,—"good God! in what debasement! What remained of her former virtue? Was this the same Madame de Warens, once so brilliant, to whom the Curé Ponteverre had given me recommendations? My heart was broken." He gave his old

maman, so altered, so wretched, all the little money he could conveniently spare, and pressed her to join her lot with his and Thérèse's. Only once more did he see her again. She set off to visit him in Geneva, and he saw her at Grangecanal — she being unable to complete her journey from want of means, which Jean Jacques, however, did something to supply. A little diamond ring was the only jewel the poor creature had left, and this she took from her finger to put on Thérèse's, who, however, instantly returned it, while she kissed with tears the generous old hand. Eight years after, she died, neglected and miserable, and was buried in the burying-ground of Lemens, above Chambéry, on July 30, 1762,—having, according to the Register of the Parish Church of St Pierre de Lemens, "died yesterday at ten o'clock, like a good Christian, and fortified by the last sacraments, aged about sixty-three."[1]

In Geneva, Rousseau was welcomed with enthusiasm by the citizens, who hailed the return of the fellow-townsman who had left it as a vagabond apprentice at the age of sixteen, and returned as a world-famed writer at the age of forty-two. They heaped such honour as they could upon him, and he soon felt regret that his being a Roman Catholic by profession lost him his right of being a citizen of a town which he honoured as a republican, and loved as a patriot. He resolved to re-enter the Protestant faith, and thus become again a citizen. It was no difficult moral feat this conversion. He never had believed in the Catholic Church, which he had entered through policy; and al-

[1] Arthur Young's Travels, p. 258.

though he did not hold the tenets of the Calvinistic faith, he held "that the Gospel being the same for all Christians, and the ground of dogma being different only where it tries to explain what cannot be understood, it belongs to each sovereign to fix both the worship and this unintelligible dogma, and that it is the duty of each citizen to follow the worship and admit the doctrine prescribed by law." He therefore put himself under the instruction of the pastor of the parish where he lived, made profession of the Protestant faith, received the Communion, and was now privileged to call himself by that title of "citizen of Geneva" of which he was so proud, which he inscribed on all his works, and to which his writings gave such significance. Charmed by the enthusiasm of his reception, he resolved to settle in Geneva, and leave for ever the cabals and artifices of Parisian society. Meantime, after a visit of four months, he returned to Paris, and there busied himself with the proof-sheets of the 'Discourse on the Inequality of Mankind,' which, to avoid the censors of the French press, he got printed in Holland. Soon his resolution to settle in Geneva died out. He thought his Discourse, which he dedicated to his Republic of Geneva, was coldly received, and had made him enemies; and further, he hated being near Voltaire, who was, he felt, corrupting the citizens by his insidious ways and vicious teaching, while living at Les Délices, at the very gate of Geneva.

Whatever perplexity he may have felt, and whatever may have been the real reasons of his not returning to Geneva, the strongest surely was the prospect of a home in the country offered to him, which would take him

away from the crowd, the coteries of Paris, and all the artificial manners and sceptical babble of its society. Before he went to Geneva, he had been staying with Madame d'Epinay at Chevrette; and one day as they walked together they came to a part of the park bordering the forest of Montmorency, where there was a house, all out of repair, surrounded by fruit-trees. It was solitary, the situation was pretty, and Rousseau exclaimed, "Ah, madame, what a delightful abode! Here is a refuge made for me." Nothing more was said, but on his return from Geneva he was again at Chevrette, and, as he with his friend walked to the same spot, he was astonished to see the broken-down cottage now a pretty, neatly furnished house. Madame d'Epinay said to him, "My bear, here is your refuge. It is you who have chosen it, and it is friendship which offers it to you." Rousseau was deeply touched at such kindness, and bathed her hand in tears, and after some delay, and not too graciously, he accepted the offer.[1] He longed to live in the quiet country, for, as he says—

"I was so weary of drawing-rooms, of fountains, of bowers, of flower-beds, and of the still more tiresome people who showed them to me; and was so overwhelmed with pamphlets, harpsichords, cards (*tri*), dull witticisms, insipid airs, petty story-tellers, and great suppers, that when I spied a poor simple hawthorn thicket, a hedge, a farmstead, a meadow; when passing through a hamlet I caught the smell of a good chevril omelette; when I heard in the

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1 Madame d'Epinay's version of the story is different, though Rousseau's more romantic account represents Madame d'Epinay's kindness in even a more favourable manner than her own.

distance the rustic refrain of the song of shepherds,—I sent to the devil all the rouge, furbelows, and perfumery, and regretting a plain dinner and common wine, I would gladly have pommelled both Mons. the cook and Mons. the master who made me dine when I sup, and sup when I go to bed."

CHAPTER V.

THE HERMITAGE.

On the 9th of April 1756, Rousseau departed with impatience for his new home. Madame d'Epinay brought Jean Jacques, Thérèse, and old Madame le Vasseur in her coach; while a farmer carted their simple furniture. When they came to the end of the road, the old woman, nearly seventy, heavy and unable to walk, was carried along the path through the forest in a chair, weeping with pleasure; while Jean Jacques walked silently, with his head down, as if he had nothing to do with the party. Now, however, that he was at the Hermitage, he was at peace.

"Although the weather was cold, and even snow still lay on the ground, the earth began to spring, violets and primroses had appeared, the buds had begun to shoot, and the very night of my arrival was marked by the first song of the nightingale, which made itself heard almost under my window, in a wood that touched the house. After a light sleep, forgetting, when I awoke, that I was transplanted, I still thought myself in the Rue de Grenelle, when suddenly this singing made me start, and I exclaimed in my transport, 'At last my wishes are fulfilled!' . . . There was not a path, a copse, a corner in the neighbourhood of my house, that I

did not visit next day. The more I examined this charming retreat, the more I felt it made for me. This solitary rather than wild spot carried me in fancy to the end of the world. It had touching beauties which are but seldom found near cities; and never, if suddenly transported here, could any one have imagined himself only four leagues from Paris."[1]

His transports calmed, he soon set to work, for all he had was the sum of 2000 francs produced by his writings. The mornings he spent in copying music, in the afternoon walking in the forest of Montmorency, always carrying paper and pencil, for he could only think when he walked, and he wrote best in the open air. "The moment I stop," he says, "I cease to think, and as soon as I am in motion again my head resumes its work." He composed with difficulty, and sustained thought was an agony to him; and as ideas or phrases occurred to him he would jot them down, and before they were used they were altered painfully again and again. He was busy with several projects. A great work on 'Political Institutions,' conceived in Venice, and which, although he had been occupied irregularly for six years by the subject, he was destined never to finish: a work on 'Sensitive Morality,' intended to show how physical circumstances, climate, colours, and food, act on the body, and ultimately on the mind; and another on 'Education,' out of which 'Emile' grew,—took up his thoughts in his lonely walks. Besides all this, he had to toil over an abstract of the Abbé de St Pierre's works, at the instigation of Madame Dupin; and as he had manuscripts intrusted to him, he did not like to give up the task, though he found it intolerable. Merely to read the pro-

[1] Confessions, B. ix.

ductions of the clever and copious Abbé was bad enough, but to arrange and digest twenty-three diffuse, wearisome volumes, full of crude suggestions, from a "Project to render Roads passable in Winter," to a "Project to make Dukes and Peers useful," or a "Project to prevent Mendicancy," was too much; and Rousseau must have rejoiced when he got, in 1761, the Abbé's 'Perpetual Peace' safely published, and enabled the world again to read this impossible proposition to have a European Diet to make peace over all the world.

In the Hermitage time passed quietly with Rousseau, who thought out his books when the weather was fine, and wrote at his 'Dictionary of Music,' or copied, when it was raining. In summer, too, he saw much of Madame d'Epinay when she was at Chevrette. He was obliged to be at her summons, for she liked to see much of "her bear," as she called him; and much he grumbled under the attentions of his kindly but injudicious friend, who did not know how to manage a man who was angry at not being left alone, and yet complained that his friends never came to see him. Madame d'Epinay is described with no flattering pen by Rousseau: but we can see her, from Diderot's and her own descriptions, as little, elegant, and rather pretty, with long black curls flowing on her neck; with a bright youthful face, black eyes full of piquancy, and a manner full of grace and vivacity; a woman with a kindly heart, a little folly, and a good deal of wit, who, because she liked being at her country-house for a few months surrounded by friends who reminded her of town, always believed she had a vocation for retirement. As for M. d'Epinay, who appeared seldom, he was an

immoral man of the world, who let his wife do as she pleased so long as he was allowed to do as he liked, and is compactly described by Diderot as a man "who had spent 2,000,000 without saying one good thing or doing one good act." Rousseau, in his new position, did not care to be constantly at the call of his hostess, and did not feel at ease with her friends, for he disliked feeling himself a cipher in the company of agile talkers who came with Madame d'Epinay to Chevrette in summer. We may also suppose he did not enjoy the subordinate position of friend where Baron Grimm was favoured as a lover. "I cannot endure lukewarmness," he once wrote to Madame de Latour; "and I would rather be hated to the utmost by a thousand and loved to the same degree by one. Whosoever is not passionately devoted to me, is not worthy of me." Better than visiting at the chateau, he liked writing by his open window to the singing of the birds, only dreading the importunate visitors who disturbed his fancies and wasted his time. Starting with his dog, he every day set off to spend hours and hours in the woods, indulging in the sweet day-dreams which took him away from a poor and troublesome reality. Seeing nobody in existence worth caring for, he entered there into an ideal world, peopled with visionary friends, tender and true.

"I became so fond of soaring in the empyrean, in the midst of the charming objects with which I was surrounded, that I there passed hours and days heedless of time; and losing the remembrance of all other things, I had scarcely eaten a morsel in haste before I was impatient to escape and run to regain my groves. When, ready to depart for the enchanted world, I saw wretched mortals arrive, who

came to detain me on earth, I could neither conceal nor moderate my vexation ; and, no longer master of myself, I gave them so uncivil a reception that it might be called brutal." [1]

Whenever he got safe out of the house he was happy.

"I went then with more tranquil step to some wild part of the forest,—some desert place where nothing showing the hand of man spoke of servitude and domination, — some shelter where I could believe myself the first to enter, and where no importunate third came to interpose between nature and myself. It was then that it seemed to unfold to my eyes an ever-new magnificence. The gold of the broom and the purple of the heather struck my eyes with a splendour that touched my heart ; the majesty of the trees which covered me with their shade, the delicacy of the shrubs which surrounded me, the astonishing variety of the grasses and flowers which I crushed under my feet, kept my mind in a constant alternation of observation and admiration, and sometimes made me repeat to myself, 'No ; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' My imagination did not leave long deserted a land so adorned. I soon peopled it with beings according to my heart, and, chasing far off opinion, prejudices, all factitious passions, I transported into the asylums of nature men worthy to inhabit them. I formed a charming society, of which I did not feel myself unworthy ; I made for myself a golden age of fancy, and filled these lovely days with all the scenes of my life which left me sweet memories, and all those which my heart could yet desire. . . . So rolled on, in a continual delirium, the most charming days that any human being ever passed ; and when the setting sun made me think of retiring, astonished by the swiftness of time, I believed I had not enough employed my day. I thought of being able to enjoy yet more, and, to recover lost time, I said to myself, 'I shall come back to-morrow.'" [2]

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[1] Confessions, B. ix.

[2] Third Letter to Malesherbes.

In this state of exaltation the story of the 'New Héloïse' formed itself in his mind. He imagined two female friends,—one brown, the other fair; one lively, and the other languishing. He imagined, further, a lover with virtues and faults like his own; he placed the scene near Vevay, full of the beauties of nature which had filled his heart years ago. He wrote the letters of which the novel is composed in an ecstasy of imagination, and with inexpressible delight, and in the first winter he finished the first two parts of his romance. He got gilt paper to receive a fair copy of them, azure and silver powder to dry the ink, and blue ribbon to bind the sheets together, finding nothing dainty enough, he says, for the charming girls, on whom he doted like another Pygmalion. In the long evenings by the fireside, Jean Jacques, with quivering voice, would read aloud to Thérèse and her mother, while his cat purred, and his dog "Duc" snored in cosy duet beside him. Thérèse, bewildered by the splendid rhapsodies and amorous dialectics of St Preux and Julie, would sigh sympathetically, though she said nothing; while the old woman, half dozing in her chair, and not understanding one word, always carefully remarked, when Jean Jacques paused, "Monsieur, that is very fine." The whole scene is admirable comedy. Never had an author such a curiously uncongenial audience as Rousseau, in his dull consort and her sordid mother, for those thrilling pages which were soon to touch the hearts of all society.

When in the excitement of composition, he lived in an amorous dreamland, while an entrancing reality came to give substance to his shadowy loves. He had met Madame d'Houdetot, a sister of M. d'Epinay, once

or twice. In the previous year she had once appeared at the Hermitage, and then departed like a sweet vision. Again she came one day in 1757 on horseback, dressed in man's clothes, and from that hour Rousseau's peace of mind was gone, and he was in love, he says, for the first time in his life :—

"The Comtesse d'Houdetot was nearly thirty years old [she was really twenty-seven], and not handsome ; her face was marked with smallpox, her complexion lacked delicacy ; she was short-sighted, and her eyes were rather round ; but she had a youthful air notwithstanding, and her expression, at once lively and gentle, was caressing ; she had a forest of long black hair in natural curls, which hung down to the waist. Her figure was slight, and she had in all her movements a mingled awkwardness and grace. Her wit was natural and pleasing ; gaiety, thoughtlessness, and *naïveté* were all happily blended."

Such was the object on whom Jean Jacques centred all his heart. Every one agreed with him in liking Madame d'Houdetot, her winning ways, her kindly, frank nature, her sweetness of expression, which lighted up a rather sallow face, and which beamed in her eyes, which, it must be confessed, squinted even in these early days. Her best friends could not say she was beautiful ; her worst friends—she had no enemies—did not deny she was charming. The Comtesse had been married against her will to a man for whom she never cared, and consoled herself by loving the Marquis de St Lambert, with all the fidelity which women in that age showed to their lovers instead of to their husbands. St Lambert was an officer in the Lorraine Guards ; he was handsome, a wit, and a "philosopher," and afterwards a poet, who had the eminent distinction of supplanting

Voltaire in the exacting affections of Madame du Châtelet, and who had now forestalled Rousseau in the open heart of Madame d'Houdetot. Both her husband and her lover were now engaged in the war in Germany, while she was living alone at Eaubonne, a few miles from the Hermitage.

Before this time Jean Jacques "had been intoxicated with love without an object." This intoxication fixed itself on her, in whom he saw all the perfections with which he had gifted the Julie of his imagination. He trembled as he spoke to her, he sighed as he thought of her; he was in an ecstasy when she was near, in an agony when she was away. He placed in niches of the trees those impassioned letters which he wrote so well, and which he himself admired so much. Never was a youth more madly in love than this solitary of forty-five. During all this Madame d'Houdetot never forgot her love for St Lambert, and when they met and wandered through the woods, or sat by the waterfall in the moonlight, while Jean Jacques showed his love for her, she gently restrained him, and talked of St Lambert, as they sat hand in hand, murmuring the sweetest folly.

"One evening, after having supped together [at Eaubonne], we went to walk in the garden by the clear moonlight. At the foot of the garden was a considerable copse, by which we passed to a pretty grove ornamented with a cascade of which I had given her the idea, and which she carried out. Immortal memory of innocence and joy! It was in this grove that, seated with her upon a seat of turf, under an acacia covered with flowers, I found, to render the emotions of my heart, a language truly worthy of them. This was the first and the only time of my life; but I was sublime, if one can so call everything agreeable and seductive

which the most tender and most ardent love can inspire in the heart of man. What intoxicating tears did I shed upon her knees; how many did I make her shed in spite of herself! At last, in an involuntary transport, she exclaimed, 'No! never was man so lovable, and never did lover love like you. But your friend St Lambert hears us, and my heart cannot love twice.'"

In all these interviews, and in all these amorous passages, while Rousseau thought her delightful, Madame d'Houdetot thought he was mad—at any rate so she told her lover. "His madness must be very great," remarked St Lambert, "if she can see it." These dreams and transports were at last interrupted. One day the recluse found the Countess sad, after a visit to Paris, for St Lambert had been told of what was going on, and the delightful dalliance and rapturous correspondence must cease. Some time afterwards the letters of Madame d'Houdetot were at her request returned, but when Jean Jacques asked his own back, she replied, to his discomfiture and incredulity, that they were burned. "No!" he writes to the world; "such letters as mine were to her, are never flung into the fire. Those of 'Julie' have been found ardent; heavens! what would have been said of these? No, no; she who can inspire such a passion, will never have the courage to burn the proof of it. If these letters are not yet destroyed, and should they ever be made public, the world will see how I have loved." Yet burned they really were. Forty years afterwards a friend sat in the same famous grove with Madame d'Houdetot, then an ugly old lady, with a dreadful squint, and a kindly, sweet expression, and St Lambert then an irritable old gentleman—they lived

together till death—and they talked of the now world-famed scene of long ago, and the letters of which Rousseau was so proud. The Countess said she had really burned all except four, which she had sent to St Lambert. Turning to him, the friend asked after their fate. "Burned too," replied the superannuated philosopher, with a smile and a grimace. Thus ended the old romance in the dullest of commonplace.

Rousseau was soon torn by a passion less tender and more sordid, and he began to see enemies in his best friends. When he had, in 1756, resolved to stay in the country, the philosophers in Paris laughed at his resolution. What in the eyes of eighteenth-century society could be more dreary, more wretched than the country, with no *salons* to enter, no brilliant talkers to meet, no scandal to hear,—where there were only dull woods to walk in when the weather was fine, and only dripping trees to gaze wistfully on when the days were wet? The dust of the Palais Royal was better than all the verdure of Montmorency. Friends knowing his morose nature, proclaimed that if Rousseau did not prove he was mad already by going there, he certainly would become mad if he stayed there. When Grimm heard of Madame d'Epinay's offer, he wrote: "You render Rousseau a very bad service in giving him the residence of the Hermitage, but you render yourself one very much worse. Solitude will end by blackening his imagination; he will think all his friends unjust, ungrateful, and you first of all, if you refuse to do as he orders." Never was prophecy more wretchedly true. When, further, winter came with its dreary short days, its frost and snow, and yet Rousseau resolved to stay in

the country, Diderot, in his impulsive and vehement way, urged his return to Paris, and depicted in awful terms old Le Vasseur "at the age of eighty," stretched on the bed of death, alone, without help in the desert country, and spoke to Rousseau as if he were an "assassin." Naturally the solitary was infuriated, and the dispute became fierce between these two great men, who wrote like geniuses and quarrelled like children, and who were never so excited as when they debated some paltry affair like this with splendid vituperation. As for Diderot, he is always extreme in his words and acts. "He is too hot an oven," said Voltaire; "everything baked in it gets burned." It shows the littleness of great folks, when we find that such contemptible squabbles created the deepest interest in every lettered and fashionable circle in Paris, and were the keen subject of talk in every coterie. "*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the haughty Duc de Castries, "everywhere I go I hear nothing spoken of but this Rousseau and this Diderot. Can you conceive it? persons of no birth, persons who have not a sou, who live in a third storey!"

Amidst these absurd but most bitter quarrels Madame d'Epinay was fast losing faith in her hermit: she began to suspect that Grimm's warning after all was wise,—that Rousseau, notwithstanding all his elevated sentiments, was false; that, in fact, he was "a moral dwarf mounted on stilts." One day he said to her, "Know, madame, once for all, that I am vicious, that I was born so, and that you cannot conceive with what difficulty I do good, and how little it costs me to do evil. You laugh! To prove that I speak the truth, know that I cannot

prevent myself hating those who have done me a kindness."[1]

One day in the summer of 1757 Rousseau was told that Madame d'Epinay was so ill that it was desirable that she should go to Geneva, where she would be under the care of Tronchin, the famous physician. Diderot wrote to him in his impassioned way that it was his duty to accompany her, as she went in the winter ill and lonely to a strange country, and it was but fitting that he should requite in this way all the kindness he had received. Rousseau was in a fury, and, it must be owned, he had some reason to complain of his too officious friends. He was indignant at being reminded of his duties, for, as he once said to Duclos, "I cannot endure people to whom I am under obligations." He made a furious reply, and wrote also to Grimm justifying his conduct in declining to go, and denying any obligation whatever. "I have learned for two years in her house unremitting subjection, with the finest discourses on liberty; served by twenty servants, and cleaning my own shoes every morning; loaded with indigestions, and sighing unceasingly for my wooden bowl. . . . Compare my benefits from madame with my country sacrificed, and two years of slavery, and tell me whether it is she or I who is most obliged to the other?" Upon this came a scathing answer from Grimm, jealous for his mistress, whose acquaintance he had first made through Jean Jacques, reminding him of the daily marks of tender and generous friendship the lady had shown him through the course of two years. The letter, written, Rousseau said, with "infernal hate," closed for ever the steady intercourse of

[1] Mémoires de Mad. d'Epinay, iii. 51.

years between these two uncongenial friends: "I shall never see you more, and shall think myself happy if I can banish from my mind the memory of your conduct." Thus, one by one, Rousseau's friends dropped off, and he sorrowfully felt that he must leave the Hermitage, associated with so much love and hate, and retire to some remote retreat "unknown to all those barbarous tyrants who are called friends." He, however, wrote to Madame d'Epinay, saying that he had been advised by friends not to leave until spring, and received the cutting reply: "Since you are determined to quit the Hermitage, and are persuaded that you ought to do so, I am astonished your friends have prevailed upon you to stay there. For my part I never consult mine upon my duty." After this Rousseau had no alternative but to leave.

In less than a week after, his goods were carted through the snow of December to Montlouis at Montmorency, where a friend had placed at his service a dilapidated house. Old Madame le Vasseur was sent off with such chattels as belonged to her; and taking some which certainly did not, she went to Paris, where Rousseau, glad to get rid of so unwholesome a companion, promised to provide for her wants.

The only reason for dwelling so much on these wretched quarrels is that they hung like a cloud on Rousseau's own mind, form so important a part of his life, and are the episodes on which his contemporaries based that opinion of his character which they have transmitted to us.

CHAPTER VI.

MONTMORENCY.

ROUSSEAU was now settled at Montlouis, feeling himself aloof from all his former friends,—or rather that his friends had changed to enemies. Grimm, Diderot, D'Holbach, he was certain were spreading evil stories about him, blackening his character, and turning his lonely life into malicious ridicule. In his agony of mind he sought to divert his thoughts by writing a reply to an article on Geneva by D'Alembert, in the Encyclopedia. In this article the author, to please Voltaire, advocated the establishment of a theatre in the city from which by clerical influence it had been excluded. Voltaire, at his residence at Les Délices, near Geneva, had built a theatre for the production of his own tragedies. He often invited Genevese citizens to see them, taking a malicious delight in giving to the "children of Calvin" these forbidden pleasures. This new advocacy of a theatre called forth the indignation of Rousseau, playwright though he himself was, and he wrote a reply denouncing its introduction into a little uncorrupted town of 24,000 inhabitants, where it would introduce luxury and idleness, while Paris, with its population of 600,000, had only

four theatres. With perverse force, eloquence, and ingenuity, he argued against the theatre; for although his arguments are aimed against theatrical performances only in Geneva, they really condemn the stage altogether. In the course of this Letter he maintains that the theatre does not remove the bad feelings of society, but flatters them and intensifies them; because it shows vice triumphant, and makes the young superior to the old, who in tragedies are represented as tyrants, and in comedies as dotards. He even justifies the social contempt with which actors were regarded in his day, and has not a word to say against those cruel ecclesiastical rules against which D'Alembert protested, which denied the worthiest actor or actress the right of decent burial. "What is the profession of an actor? A trade by which he exhibits himself for money, submits himself to ignominy and affronts which one buys the right of offering him, and puts publicly his person for sale. What is then, in reality, the spirit which an actor receives from his condition? a mixture of baseness, falsity, absurd pride, and unworthy degradation, which fits him for every character except the noblest,—that of a man,—which he abandons." The work, which is full of digressions, containing acute literary criticisms and eloquent social strictures, all written with admirable force and subtlety, concludes by lauding the muscular glories of the Spartans, and by recommending, instead of the demoralising amusement of the stage, boating, dancing, and all athletics which strengthen the body without corrupting the heart.

In the hard winter in February, every morning and evening for three weeks, he went to the old turret at the

foot of his garden, overlooking the valley of Montmorency, and there he sat, exposed to bitter cold, and wrote his passionate reply "with no fire but the heat of his heart to warm him." When this "Letter to M. d'Alembert," which Jean Jacques fondly called his "Benjamin," appeared, it gave umbrage to the philosophers, whom he always bitterly calls the "Holbachic coterie," and stirred the rage of the patriarch of Ferney, who saw the chances of his plays being performed in the city of Calvin diminishing under the malign influence of Rousseau.

Jean Jacques was not idle at Montlouis. The 'New Héloïse' was in the hands of the printers; 'Emile' was being written; the 'Social Contract,' which had been constructed out of materials for the treatise on the 'Political Institutions," which he abandoned, was finished; while his spare hours at home were devoted to copying music. Neither was he yet out of the meshes of the world. People intruded upon him in the country; and he consented sometimes to visit in town. He even dined with Madame d'Epinay. Of course, though he entered into society, he did not the less grumble at it; and he complained that the favours of the rich were too expensive for a poor man like him to receive. Peevishly he murmurs: "If a lady wrote to me from Paris to the Hermitage or to Montmorency, she regretted the twopence the postage of the letter would cost me. She sent it by one of her servants, who arrived on foot all perspiring, and to whom I gave a dinner and a crown, which he had well earned. If she proposed that I should pass eight or fifteen days with her in her country-house, she said to herself, 'This will be a saving to the

poor fellow; during that time his food will cost him nothing.' She never thought that during that time I should do no work; that my household expenses, my lodging, and my linen and my clothes, were still continued; that I paid my barber double; that it cost me more to be in her house than in my own." Worse still, he counts up what it had cost him to visit at Madame d'Houdetot's once adored house.

Near Montlouis was the chateau of Montmorency, where the Duc and Duchesse de Luxemburg spent some time every year. After he had settled near them, they sent inviting him to sup with them whenever it pleased him; but all their invitations he declined, although the fascinating Comtesse de Boufflers added her solicitations. At last, one day the Duke called with some friends, and was received by Rousseau at his rickety house, in a room ill-floored, amongst dirty dishes and broken pots. After this visit, Jean Jacques felt himself obliged to return it, and this began one of the most pleasing relations of his varied life; for under the sunshine of this aristocratic favour his heart melted. "I loved them," he owned to Malesherbes, "although I hate the great; I hate their state, their hardness, their prejudices, their littlenesses, and all their vices; and I would hate them more if I despised them less." The Duchess was a leader of society. She was beautiful, witty, and haughty. She had the power of making herself charming, and the power of making herself feared; her sarcastic sayings and her delicate phrases fluttered from lip to lip; her likes or dislikes could make or unmake a social reputation. "She rules wherever she is," said Madame du Deffand, "and makes always the impression she wishes.

She uses her advantages almost in the same way as a god, and lets us believe in our free-will while she determines us, and like a god makes elect and reprobate by the height of her omnipotence. She is penetrating enough to frighten one, and is more feared than loved." So she appeared in society: this is how she appeared to Rousseau:—

"Hardly had I seen her before I was conquered. I found her charming, with that charm which stands the test of time —the fittest to act upon my heart. I expected to find in her a conversation biting and full of epigrams; but it was not so—it was much better. The conversation of Madame de Luxemburg does not sparkle with wit: it has no sallies, it has not even *finesse*, but it has an exquisite delicacy which never strikes and always pleases. Her flatteries are the more intoxicating because they are simple; it is said that they escape her involuntarily, and that it is her heart which overflows, only because it is too full. I believed I saw from the first visit that, in spite of my awkward air and clumsy phrases, I did not displease her. Every lady of the Court can persuade you of that, whether true or not, when they wish; but all do not know like Madame de Luxemburg how to render this persuasion so agreeable that no one ever would think of doubting it."

This respect for Madame de Luxemburg was mingled, however, with timidity, and he was more at ease with the more homely Marshal.

His new friends treated him with great kindness; and while his house at Montlouis was being repaired, they put at his service a house in the middle of the park. There he stayed till his home was put to rights, and after that he still kept the key of this house, to which he went two or three times a-week. The "little chateau," as it was

called, was in a lovely situation, with the lake on one side, and an orangery on the other. In this delicious solitude, during the spring of 1759, in the midst of the woods, with the songs of birds and the perfumes of orange-trees, Jean Jacques composed the fifth book of 'Emile' in a continued ecstasy. Rising with the sun, he hastened every morning to breathe the scented air, and was happy in the society of Thérèse, his cat, and his dog: the name of the last he had judiciously changed from "Duc" to "Turc" not to offend his ducal friends. In July, when they were in the country, Rousseau was constantly in attendance. The mornings he spent with Madame de Luxemburg; after dinner he walked with the Duke. There was always a prominent place for him at table; every respect was paid to the distinguished hermit. He, however, was not quite at ease with his hostess; he was not ready with his talk, and feared her nimble wit when he was present, and her sarcastic criticism when his back was turned. To save himself, therefore, the embarrassment of conversation, he offered to read the yet unpublished 'New Héloïse.' Every morning at ten o'clock Jean Jacques appeared at the chateau, and read aloud to the Duchess, who was in bed, and to the Duke, who sat beside her. She was charmed with the book, and with the author. "She spoke of nothing but me,—thought of nothing else,—said civil things of me from morning till night, and embraced me ten times a-day. She insisted on my always having the place by her side at table; and when great lords wished to take it, she told them it was mine, and made them sit elsewhere. The impression these charming manners made upon me, who was subjugated by the least mark

of affection, may be easily guessed." Rousseau was flattered. He loved admiration, even when he seemed most to shrink from it; the chief miseries of his life were the fear of losing it, and the fancy that he had lost it. He said truly that he liked humble fare and simple living; but he did not dislike on his terrace at Montlouis, shaded with limes, with syringas and lilacs and woodbines, to receive in the afternoon the friends of the Duc de Luxemburg,—the Duc de Choiseul, the Duchesse de Boufflers, the Prince de Tingri, and the Comtesse de Boufflers, and "other persons of that rank," as he says with complacency,—who had come up a fatiguing ascent to see the famous man, and sat and talked so affably on the stone benches. Democrat though he was, he felt it the "greatest honour letters ever procured him," that the Prince de Conti twice came to see him, and played chess in the turret with him, although Jean Jacques had courage enough to checkmate him, in spite of the signals of horrified courtiers. "Monseigneur," said he, "I honour your serene highness too much not always to beat you at chess;" and, to show further independence, he sharply refused his presents of game.

In 1760 there was surreptitiously published a letter which Rousseau had written in 1757 to Voltaire on receiving his poem on the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon in 1755. That poem, so powerful and passionate, while not denying a God, puts in their most desolating aspect those calamities whose accordance with a beneficent Providence it treats as insoluble. Rousseau, jealous for the honour of God in an age of scepticism, replied to Voltaire by an argument which strove to show how even in seeming evils

there is always a wise purpose. He insists, according to his favourite doctrine, that society, not God, is to blame for human ills; that the miseries of life arise, not in a state of nature, but in a state of civilisation—not from the faults of Providence, but from the errors of man. This very earthquake at Lisbon is an instance. It was not nature that assembled 20,000 houses, each six or seven storeys high; and if the inhabitants of that city had been dispersed over the country, or more lightly housed, there would have been little or no danger. Every one would have fled at the first shock, and would have been twenty miles away as merry as if nothing had happened. Can we expect the laws of nature to be altered to suit the caprices of men? In that case we would only have to build a town in order to secure a place from an earthquake. While, according to the pious, Providence is always right, and, according to philosophers, it is always wrong, he holds that Providence is probably neither right nor wrong in individual events, but acts by general beneficent laws, which make no exception in favour of persons.

"I cannot help remarking," he concludes, "the singular contrast between you and me on the subject of this letter. Sated with glory and disabused of empty greatness, you live free in the midst of abundance. Sure of your own immortality, you philosophise tranquilly on the nature of the soul; and if the body or the heart suffers, you have Tronchin for your doctor or your friend. You, however, find only evil upon the earth; and I, obscure, poor, tormented with an incurable ailment, meditate with pleasure in my retreat, and find everything is good. Whence come these apparent contradictions? You have yourself explained it. You enjoy, and I hope—and hope beautifies everything."

Thus wrote Jean Jacques, living poorly on a precarious income of £60, to the rich Voltaire with his £2000 or £3000 a-year. The letter was politely acknowledged by Voltaire, for it is full of professions of profound respect for a writer whom Jean Jacques owns as his master. It was only after they had quarrelled that Rousseau said with regard to this poem on the Disaster of Lisbon, that Voltaire, "while he appeared to believe in God, never really believed in anything but the Devil."[1] When, now, this epistle was published without the consent of either party, Rousseau wrote explaining matters; but in his letter to Voltaire (June 17, 1760) he spoke words which prevented all good relations continuing with a man in whom sweetness of temper was not the most prominent quality.

"I love you not, monsieur. You have done me, your disciple and enthusiastic admirer, the most painful injuries. You have corrupted Geneva, in return for the shelter it has afforded you; you have alienated from me my fellow-citizens, in return for the lavish applause of you I have given them. It is you who render residence in my country insupportable to me; it is you who will oblige me to die in a foreign land, deprived of all the consolations of the dying, and cause me to be thrown into the ditch, while all the honours a man can expect will accompany you in my country. Finally, I hate you, because you have desired that I should; but I hate you as a man still more worthy of loving you had you chosen."

Voltaire was furiously angry at this wild epistle: "this arch-madman," "this dog of Diogenes," "this charlatan," are the gentle terms by which Voltaire henceforth spoke of him; while Rousseau spoke and wrote

[1] Confessions, B. ix.

not less bitterly of that "braggart" (*fanfaron*) "of impiety," and that "Polchinello." The two great leaders of the last century—the one of rational and the other of sentimental philosophy — henceforth continued as hostile in life as they were in spirit and in purpose.[1]

It was in the end of 1760 that 'La Nouvelle Héloïse' appeared. "All Paris," Rousseau says, "was impatient to see the romance, and the booksellers' shops in the Rue St Jacques and in the Palais Royal were besieged by people who sought news about it."[2] He had spread news of the book beforehand, which whetted curiosity. Duclos spoke in admiration of it at the Academy; Madame de Luxemburg confided fascinating details of it to favoured friends at Court; Madame d'Houdetot whispered piquant reports to eager groups in the *salons;* it was hinted that strange passionate incidents of the writer's own life would be found in it—an impression which Jean Jacques carefully did not remove. When it came out, booksellers could not supply enough copies: it was lent out at twelve sous a volume (there were four), which was not to be detained beyond an hour. With deep pleasure Rousseau relates how one night, the Princess de Talmont, when dressed for the ball during the Carnival, took up a volume half an hour before the time of starting, read on till midnight, when she ordered her carriage: on being reminded at two o'clock in the morning that the carriage was waiting

[1] When, in 1771, subscriptions were being raised for a statue to Voltaire, Rousseau haughtily sent a subscription, writing, "I have paid sufficiently dear to have the right of being allowed this honour." Voltaire was with difficulty persuaded to allow the money to be accepted from his enemy.

[2] Confessions, B. xi.

still, read on till four o'clock, when she ordered the horses to be taken out, and then went to bed, where she continued reading during the rest of the morning. Society was enthusiastic; and Rousseau even boldly assures us that "women were so intoxicated with both the book and its author, that there were very few even in the highest ranks of whom he could not have made a conquest if he had tried." Anybody would have given anything for a scrap of the author's handwriting, or a glass out of which he had drunk; high-born dames thought it an honour to speak to dull Thérèse le Vasseur, or to pat his dog "Turc;" ladies corresponded with him in the characters of his Julie and Claire, with all the effusion the names suggest; admirers burst into tears on seeing him for the first time. Amidst the general applause, there were some discriminating and some censorious voices heard: not a few men of the world laughed at the pedantry and *baisers âcres* of Julie and the ineffable excellence of M. de Wolmar; while Voltaire proclaimed the work intolerably dull, and asserted that it was crushed by "Aloisia"—a criticism under the name of the Marquis de Ximenès, which he himself had concocted.

Overwhelmed with reputation, Rousseau was exacting of attention, and he thought that as his intimacy lengthened with Madame de Luxemburg, it did not become stronger. When he had finished reading to her the 'New Héloïse,' he began 'Emile,' which he naturally found was not so much relished; and he immediately fancied that less attention was being paid to him, that he did not sup quite so often, and jealously noted that he did not always get the old foremost place

at table. In reality, the Duchess was exceedingly kind, in her grand manner which would tolerate no familiarity; and when she called she would even embrace Thérèse, to the joy of the poor woman and the profound satisfaction of Rousseau. Jean Jacques, deeming himself very ill in the middle of 1761, besought her to search for one of his children, whose recovery would gladden the mother's heart; and he asserted that his neglect to take means of identifying them had "troubled with remorse his repose for several years." She failed, and on the whole the father was not inconsolable: he feared a wrong child might be palmed off on him, while his own parental feelings were dead. Accordingly he was doubly gratified—pleased at easing his conscience by seeking for the deserted children, still more pleased at the search being unsuccessful.

Much more successful efforts were made by the Duchess to secure the publication of 'Emile,' and arrangements were made with one bookseller in Paris and another in Amsterdam, through Malesherbes, the most liberal-minded censor of the press, and the author got 6000 francs for his work, while the 'Social Contract' was sold to Rey of Amsterdam for 1000 francs. In order to avoid consequences, it was necessary for any book of social, political, and religious courage to be printed abroad. To offend a Minister or to affront his mistress by a phrase, was more dangerous than to utter the most glaring immorality in every page. The risk was great of being sent to the Bastille to expiate a crime never intended, or of being banished the country for trying to benefit it. Hence it was that philosophic writers escaped under the screen of anonymity, though their works were

burned. Voltaire, in the calmest way in the world, denied the authorship of books everybody knew he had written; and 'La Pucelle,' 'Saul,' the 'Philosophical Dictionary,' he disowned with the utmost effrontery. When examined in prison as to the authorship of the 'Letter on the Blind,' Diderot solemnly on oath denied that he knew anything about it. D'Holbach published his 'System of Nature' under the name of a man who had been dead ten years. Turgot concealed his part in the Encyclopedia with most painful anxiety. Helvetius, whose 'L'Esprit' was burned, humbly and publicly recanted his errors. Ministers were very glad of any excuse for publicly ignoring the author, whom they perhaps personally knew, while burning the work to please a powerful personage, or at the command of a dominant party. Rousseau, however, was too bold, and was too proud, not to put his name upon the title-page of everything he wrote, and he suffered the consequences. Until 'Emile' appeared, Jean Jacques was in intense mental agony. In the autumn of 1761, and through the winter, he was ill, and endured constant physical pain night and day. His ailment affected his mind, and threw him into a delirium of agitation. He was in the deepest anxiety as to the fate of his book: the delay he attributed to the machinations of Jesuits, of philosophers, of Jansenists, and fancied that his work would suffer from mutilations, which he dreaded more than all the prosecutions he himself might undergo. At last the work appeared in May 1762, two or three months later than the 'Social Contract.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE 'NEW HÉLOÏSE,' OR 'JULIE.'

"WHOEVER does not love the 'Nouvelle Héloïse,'" wrote Rousseau one day, "may have my esteem, but never my friendship; whoever does not idolise Julie does not know what it is to love; whoever is not the friend of St Preux cannot be mine." If these were the conditions of friendship with Jean Jacques to-day, his circle of friends, it may be feared, would be very small. It is impossible to enter into the old enthusiasm felt by entranced society, as the reader to-day takes down from some unused shelf the old dusty volumes bound in dingy calf, and turning over the leaves, now yellow with age, reads in cold critical mood those letters written, as their author says, in "erotic ecstasies," full of a manner of loving as dead as the age the lovers lived in. These old-fashioned pages throb with passion still, the letters quiver with emotion as when first they were written; but it is a passion which has ceased to affect the reader of to-day, and the characters have little hold now upon the sympathy of any human being. It is fair, however, to remember the author's own warning—that his writings "can only please those who read them

with the same heart as that which dictated them." In the 'New Héloïse' the sentiment of a sentimental age reached its most characteristic expression, and society in the last century found little extravagant in its glowing pages.

The 'New Héloïse' is a remarkable combination of overstrained sentiment and practical good sense, without any of that faculty which we call the sense of humour being employed to restrain or harmonise them. Letters full of the pleadings of wild love alternate with letters full of sedate practical wisdom; transports of disappointed affection, sagacious schemes of infant education, charming pictures of provincial life, the wisest hints on landscape gardening, homilies full of courage and eloquence on such subjects as duelling and suicide, caustic notes on society, and exquisite sketches of rural ways and country scenery, succeed and mingle with each other, without interval or classification. When Rousseau wrote, French society was enthusiastic over the novels of Samuel Richardson; and there can be little doubt that Rousseau was influenced more or less by his English rival. Like him, he adopts the form of letters for his romance; like him, he attacks social follies and vices, and even the defects of the opera and the theatre; like him, he argues against duelling, immorality, and dissipation; he enforces the duties of the rich to the poor, of masters to their dependants on their estates, by the example of the Wolmars at Clarens, as Richardson had done by the example of Sir Charles Grandison and of Pamela. It would be easy, of course, to mark points of utter difference, but it would be easy also to show further their curious likeness of method, and frequent similarity of moral purpose and social teaching.

A sketch of the incidents in this romance of "philosophical gallantry" cannot give an adequate notion of the contents of the work, which certainly does not depend on its slight plot and feeble action. St Preux, the hero, is introduced to us as tutor to the daughter of the Baron d'Etange, and between them there rises a passionate affection. As the title of the book implies, the guilty love of Abelard and Héloïse is repeated in their case, to Julie's shame. On being told of the affection between them, the Baron indignantly refuses to allow his daughter to marry one so inferior in rank. He will not even listen with patience to the intercession of Lord Edward Bomston, an Englishman, who plays a benevolent part in the story, and who appeals in St Preux's favour, offering even to endow him with half his fortune. In vain this magnanimous friend pleads that nobility is not written with ink on old parchments, but graven upon the heart—a kind of nobility, however, to which the egotist lover can lay little claim. The Baron is impervious on all points.

"If the son-in-law [pleads Bomston] whom I propose to you cannot reckon, like you, a dubious line of forefathers, he shall be the founder and head of his house, as your first ancestor was of yours. Would you consider yourself dishonoured by alliance with the head of your own family; and does not this contempt reflect upon yourself? How many great names would sink into oblivion if only those were reckoned which had begun with a man of merit? Judge of the past by the present; for two or three citizens who distinguish themselves by honest means, a thousand knaves every day ennoble their families; and what does this nobility, of which their descendants are so proud, prove, if not the thefts and infamy of their ancestor? . . . Whatever

you may think of me, I should be very sorry to have no other proof of my merit than the name of a man who died 500 years ago."

Such democratic sentiments only served, of course, to increase the dislike of the father to the proposed son-in-law, and the irritation of the noble at the depreciation of his order. St Preux at last leaves the district with reluctance and in anguish, for Julie, moved by the rage of her father and the tears of her mother, urges his departure. Her cousin Claire, the confidant of Julie (as Miss Anne Howe is of Clarissa Harlowe), describes to her the heartrending scene. "I saw him, like one out of his senses, throw himself on his knees upon the staircase, kissing the steps a thousand times, and D'Orbe could hardly tear him from the cold stone, against which he pressed himself, uttering prolonged moans." M. d'Orbe, deeply affected, returned with his handkerchief at his eyes, and told her how Lord Edward waited at the door in his carriage, and, hurrying to meet him, and pressing him to his breast, said in a tender voice, "Come, unfortunate man—come and pour your griefs into a heart which loves you." After his departure, St Preux corresponds with Julie in letters full of desolation, receiving answers full of sympathy, mixed with sage admonition, with learned references to Cato and Regulus,—for in all the transports of her love, she always writes with an air of superior wisdom, and her lover seems to act far less like her tutor than she to speak like his governess. Her discreetness, however, only increases his sense of grievance.

"But you, Julie!—oh you! who once knew how to love, —how has your tender heart forgotten to live? how is the

sacred fire extinguished in your breast? how have you lost the taste for those heavenly pleasures which you alone could inspire and feel? You chase me away without pity; you banish me with opprobrium; you give me up to my despair; and you do not see, in the error which misleads you, that in making me miserable, you take away your own happiness. O Julie! believe me, you will in vain seek another heart akin to your own: a thousand will, without doubt, adore you; mine alone knows how to love you."

From the country St Preux passes to Paris; and although he writes that he enters with "secret horror this vast desert of the world," and that "this chaos" offers him only "a dreadful solitude, where dreary silence reigns," he soon begins to indulge pretty freely in its pleasures. The Swiss tutor now notes the vices of society with the open eye of a foreigner, which enabled Rousseau to detect and criticise the evils of French customs and institutions with so much force and freshness. He ridicules (and it is Jean Jacques who speaks through him) the follies of popular amusements and the mode of fashionable talk, where sentiment is on the lips, but never in the heart; while with more vigour than consistency he condemns the laxity of conventional morals in the brilliant world of Paris. His lively and admirable notes on society are received with even less graciousness than his abject confessions of lapse into vice; and Julie utters severe regrets that since he has begun to live among people of ability, his own seems to have diminished.

This correspondence is for a while interrupted by a terrible discovery. Julie's hidden letters from St Preux are found out, and the fatal secret is open. The fury of the father, the grief of her dying mother at the dis-

honour of her daughter, add to her own bitter remorse. At last, urged by the Baron, Julie gains from her lover a surrender of her engagement. He sends the scornful note: "I give to Julie d'Etange the right of disposing of herself, and of giving her hand without consulting her heart;" and at the same time he writes furiously to the Baron, bidding him "Go, father, barbarous and unworthy of a name so gentle. You meditate the most frightful murder (*parricide*), while a daughter, tender and submissive, immolates herself to your prejudices"—and so on, in his wonted strain of unvirtuous indignation; for St Preux never doubts for an instant that it is the Baron's solemn parental duty to give his daughter to the man who has surreptitiously loved and cruelly wronged her. Though thus renouncing Julie, his passion forces him to see her once more, even though he learns she is ill with the dreaded small-pox. The scene is afterwards passionately related to Julie by Claire, who admits him to her cousin's room, where she lies insensible:—

"He threw himself on his knees and kissed your curtains, —weeping, he raised his hands and eyes to heaven sobbing; he could hardly contain his grief and his cries. Without seeing him, you mechanically uncovered one of your hands. He seized it with a kind of fury, and the kisses of fire which he applied to the sick hand awoke you more than the voices and murmurings of those who surrounded you."

The natural result of this frantic scene is, that St Preux also takes the small-pox.

In time, pressed by her father's importunities, Julie marries M. de Wolmar, a man of fifty, estimable, calm, philosophical, but, to Julie's secret grief, an unbeliever. In his despair St Preux meditated suicide, from which

he was dissuaded by Bomston, who induced him to sail with Admiral Anson in his famous voyage round the world. The eloquent letters which were written in favour of suicide, and Bomston's counter-arguments, gain a sombre interest from the sinister circumstances connected with Rousseau's own death. When we bear in mind the state of his health at the time he wrote these pages, never free from pain day or night, we may well believe that if not in the casuistry of St Preux, at least in the measured opinion of Bomston, he expresses his own private views. While pleading powerfully against suicide, Lord Edward admits that violent bodily pain, when incurable, may excuse a man for putting an end to his existence. "For even before dying he has ceased to live, and in ending his existence he is only completing his release from a body which embarrasses him, and which contains his soul no longer." Allowing himself to live, St Preux sets sail, and six years afterwards he returns, when Wolmar, although he knows the old relations between him and his former pupil, asks him to Clarens to live with them. The invitation accepted, the philosophical husband witnesses with perfect equanimity the rapturous greeting. "At the sound of her voice," wrote St Preux to Lord Edward, "I felt myself tremble. I turned round,—I saw her. . . . O my lord! O my friend! . . . We embraced each other in silence and in a sacred rapture, and it was not till after this exquisite moment that our voices broke forth in confused murmurs, and our eyes filled with tears." All this Wolmar observes with calm serenity. With perfect confidence in the quondam lovers, and still more confidence in his own knowledge of human nature, he

leaves Clarens in a few days, and goes away to a distant property.

We are now at the second part of the 'New Héloïse,' and the fourth and fifth books, which Rousseau considered "masterpieces of diction." The old life of Julie has passed away, her impetuous love has given place to tender friendship for her former lover (whom she calmly recommends to marry her cousin), and to steady respect for her husband. Marriage is to her a sacrament, and the past is dead and buried. Rousseau now paints the wedded life in all its beauty and simplicity, and the immoral fashionable world found their own condemnation in those pages which they read with tears of admiration but not of repentance. "What human duty," exclaims Julie, "can they regard who neglect the foremost of all?" as with her words and example she deals a keen blow at a society in which people lived heinously without fear and without reproach, and in which it was computed that when Madame du Deffand began her career, only three wives in Court circles lived respectably with their husbands. Julie performs the duties of mother and wife with the dignity and grace of a high-bred gentlewoman. We learn all the details of the household, where perfect harmony prevails; where everything is simple and everybody is true. The servants, carefully chosen, seldom leave; they have wages, which increase by a twentieth every year of their service; while workmen outside are paid according to their work. There is little communication between the male and female servants; they live apart. The women, in the nursery on Sunday evenings, have their little parties with their friends; the men, after evening service, have their games,

at which Madame and M. de Wolmar are often present; while in winter there are dances in the hall, all the servants, the neighbours, and sometimes Madame de Wolmar, joining in the pastime. Old peasants are now and then brought to the house by Wolmar, when they dine at his table, are treated with respect, and go home with presents for their families. The house is near the public road, and Wolmar and his wife are open-handed to the beggars, who swarm round them. This course is defended on very characteristic grounds; although, when we remember the social oppressions which in those days so clearly originated poverty and destitution, this conduct is not so foolish as critics have deemed it.

"We permit [argued Wolmar], we even support at great expense, a great many useless professions, many of which only serve to corrupt our morals. Now, so far from needing to fear any evil consequences from the exercise of the trade of begging, on the contrary it serves to excite the sentiment of humanity, which is so useful to unite all mankind. Again, if begging be regarded as a talent, why should we not reward the eloquence of a beggar who has wit enough to excite our compassion and induce us to relieve him, as well as I would an actor who can make me shed a few useless tears? If the one makes me admire good actions in others, the other makes me do a good action myself. It belongs to the legislature to take care that there are no beggars; but, in order to make them give up their trade, is it necessary to make all other ranks of the people inhuman?"

Rousseau, never forgetful of the plain Genevese way of living, describes how, amidst all this charity, there is strict frugality at home,—no luxury in food, no superfluity of insolent servants to aid each other in doing nothing. The embroidery is done by the women; the

wool is sent to the manufactory to be made into cloth; the wine, oil, and bread are made at the house; the butcher is paid in cattle; the grocer receives wheat for his goods; the sale of wine and grain supplies money for those extra expenses of charity which Julie dispenses to the deserving poor. Meanwhile the children are educated generally in those principles which Rousseau has laid down in 'Emile,' especially in religion—for, all devout as Julie is with her deistical views, she does not teach her children piety, nor even to pray, but says her prayers audibly in their room, so that they may learn without being taught; neither does she teach them a catechism, not wishing them to believe what are to them unintelligible words, simply because "she wishes them one day to be Christians." Devout and deeply religious, she has one great sorrow: Wolmar, who had once been an atheist, is still an utter sceptic. Educated in the Greek Church, in renouncing that he gave up faith in all creeds and clergy, for it was his wont to assert that he had only met with three priests in his life who believed in God. This religious infidelity of her husband is Julie's deep grief, and "how a man with so much virtue and so little vanity could be an unbeliever passes her comprehension." Fearing the evil effects upon the peasantry and upon her children, Wolmar is persuaded by his wife to conceal his views. He goes to church, avoids giving scandal, and "pays all that respect to the established religion of the country which the State has a right to demand of its citizens."

The pleasures of calm country life, the simple happiness of the home, the genial relations of the poor with the rich, are described with wonderful freshness, while

the admiration for nature in its wild beauty is found in these pages as in no pages ever before written. One day St Preux goes with Madame de Wolmar to visit a place which had tender associations for both connected with it. It is at the rocks of Meillerie, on the opposite side of Lake Geneva from Clarens, so long a shrine of pilgrimage for admirers of Jean Jacques, but which have been broken up by engineers to open the road by the Simplon, which here passes by the side of the lake.

"This solitary place formed a retreat wild and desert, but full of those beauties which please only feeling natures, and appear horrible to others. At twenty paces from us a torrent, formed by the melting of the snow, rolled past, carrying on its muddy tide stones, sand, and mud. Behind us, a chain of inaccessible rocks separated the platform on which we stood from that part of the Alps which is called the Glacières, because of the enormous summits of ice which, incessantly accumulating, cover them from the beginning of the world. Forests of black firs shaded us gloomily to the right; on the left, beyond the torrent, was an oak-wood; and below, the immense plain of water formed by the lake in the bosom of the Alps, separated us from the richest slopes of the Canton de Vaud; while the majestic peak of Jura crowned the landscape. In the midst of these grand and sublime objects, the little spot of ground on which we stood showed the charms of a cheerful rural retreat; a few water-springs filtered through the rocks, and flowed along the grass in crystal threads; wild fruit-trees hung their heads above us; the ground, moist and cool, was covered with grass and flowers. In comparing a retreat so sweet with the objects that surrounded it, it seemed as if the place might be the shelter of two lovers escaped alone from the overthrow of nature. When we had reached this spot, and I had gazed around me for some time,—'What!' I said to Julie, looking at her with tearful eyes; 'does your heart

say nothing here to you? do you not feel some emotion at the sight of a place so full of you?' Then, without waiting for an answer, I led her towards the rock, and showed her her name carved in a thousand places, and several verses of Petrarch and Tasso appropriate to my state when I wrote them. . . . 'O Julie,' I said to her vehemently, 'eternal charm of my heart, behold the spot where formerly sighed for you the most faithful lover on earth! Here your dear image made his happiness, and prepared him at last to receive yourself. There was then neither fruit nor shade, neither verdure nor flowers; the brooks made no divisions; there were no singing-birds,—the voracious hawk, the dismal raven, the terrible eagle of the Alps alone made these caverns resound; immense masses of ice hung over all the rocks; festoons of snow were the sole ornaments of these trees; everywhere round breathed the rigours of winter and the horrors of frost: the fire in my heart alone made the place supportable, and whole days were spent in thinking of you. Here is the stone where I sat to contemplate from a distance your happy dwelling: upon this I wrote the letter which touched your heart. These sharp flints served me to carve your name. Here I passed the frozen torrent to regain one of your letters, which a wind had borne away. There I went to re-read and kiss a thousand times the last which you wrote to me. On this high bank I stood and measured, with eager gloomy gaze, the depths of these abysses. In short, it was here that, before my departure, I came to weep for you dying, and swore never to survive you.' . . . I was going on in the same strain; but Julie, seeing me approach the edge, took fright, and seizing my hand, pressed it without a word, and with difficulty restrained a sigh; then all at once turning away, she drew me with her.—'Let us be gone [said Julie], my friend; the air of this place is not good for me.'"

In the clear moonlight they cross the Lake of Geneva, and the measured sound of the oars, the silver gleam

of the moon on the water, the fragrant air, all raising sad thoughts in St Preux's mind, he is tempted to fling himself with Julie into the water, and end his torments; but a gentler feeling passes over him. He burst as usual into torrents of tears, which, he says, "relieved him greatly." "When I recovered my self-possession, and came back to Julie, I took her hand, in which she held her handkerchief, and felt that it was wet. 'Oh,' I said, in a low tone, 'I see our hearts have not ceased to understand each other.' 'It is true,' she said, in an altered voice, 'but it is the last time they shall speak in this strain.'"

This impassioned interlude, which did not altogether accord with the dutiful, wifely heart of Madame de Wolmar, is not repeated, and she goes on her simple way, guided by rules, on which, if she reasons too much like a pedant, she acts honestly, like a true woman. She had hitherto "tried to overcome her affection by her principles, to resist temptations by her reason." But now in religion she finds her chief support. The romance ends abruptly with the death of Julie. As the result of her efforts to save her boy from drowning she falls fatally ill, and dies—succeeding, by the impressive piety of her death, in preparing the way for the eventual conversion of Wolmar, and begging from her deathbed that St Preux should live at Clarens to console her husband and to educate her children.

What was it that made the 'New Héloïse' so popular? It did not pander to one popular folly, except that of sentiment; it condemns almost every social vice and every fashionable absurdity; it censures eloquently duelling amongst men of honour, and affectation in

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women of fashion,—infidelity in morals and infidelity in faith; it urges the care of the poor upon the rich who oppressed them, love of the country upon those who shunned it, frugality of living to those who despised it, social equality to those who hated it; and yet it influenced society with astonishing power. Under its spell, people became artificially natural and ostentatiously simple. To admire the country, to return to nature, to have "expansive sensibility," to take interest in the poor, to believe in Providence, became the fashion,—not a little owing to Rousseau's teaching. The education of children, instead of being left to valets and priests, began at last to occupy the interest of parents; wives were seen with their husbands; fashionable mothers for the first time nursed their infants; rustic dresses became the fashion, and the amusements of peasants were graced by the presence of high-born ladies; in gardens there were sentimentally erected "altars of friendship;" simple dresses, *à la Jean Jacques*, were advertised and worn;[1] and even in official documents, formerly so dull and dry, we find references to "sensibility," "the feelings of the heart." We must not attribute this altogether to Jean Jacques. In Diderot's writings and elsewhere in literature, in art, and in society, we can see that there was already a movement towards less artificial life,—a reaction from the unnatural tone of society which suffered from the dread malady of *ennui*. After all, it is no regeneration that Rousseau effects; he merely gives a new outlet to the sentiment of an age worn and jaded by the ceremonial pleasures of an unreal life. People wept over the sorrows of Julie who never thought

[1] E. and J. de Goncourt: La Femme au dix-huitième siècle, chap. xi.

of imitating one of her good qualities. Fresh from perusal of the romance, forgetting its fine advocacy of domestic union, the usually discreet Madame de Blot, who had been converted from worldliness by 'Clarissa Harlowe,' without seeing the slightest incongruity, exclaims to a brilliant company that "there was no woman of feeling who would not need superior virtue to refrain from devoting her life to Rousseau, if she was sure of being loved by him."

It is difficult to tolerate the egoism of St Preux, who acts like a sensualist and boasts of his honour; who, as his selfish aims are baffled, always bemoans his fate; and as we turn from him we think of the self-apostrophe of Richardson's Lovelace: "Lord help thee for a poor, a very poor, creature." No one can feel deep interest even in Julie, so emotional, yet so didactic; so full of love, yet so fond of reasoning. The style and tone of the first part of the romance is so passionate, that Byron even maintained that there was more harm to be got from it than "Don Juan;" but Rousseau himself explains that it was not meant for girls, and, as he remarked to Hume, it could not do any harm in France, since girls, being there always brought up in a convent, could not imitate Julie's fault. Certainly for married women in French society, the second part was more wholesome reading than they at least had ever had. In a period when the loose fiction of Crebillon and Duclos was freely read by ladies, 'Julie' breathed a tone of wonderful purity.

The 'New Héloïse' awakened admiration — feigned or real—for country life, its freshness, simplicity, and healthiness: for, as Ste Beuve says, Jean Jacques in-

vented the *sentiment de vert.* Before he wrote, society knew nothing about the country, and cared nothing for its pleasures. Nobles either left their chateaus deserted, or when they visited them brought town hours, fashions, and amusements, in order to make provincial life tolerable for a month or two. But Jean Jacques carried his readers away from the noise of the city and formality of the Court, for none believed more heartily than he that "God made the country and man made the town." He gave to his age, like Cowper, pictures of rural landscapes, that breathe with the sweetness of the bright dewy spring, of the humble labours and simple virtues of the peasantry, their merry laughter as they wrought in the vineyards, their songs as they reaped the harvest, their dances in the evening, their happiness under landlords who did their duty, and under masters who treated them as friends. All this was new in an age when the country was the Siberia of society, and when country people were treated as cattle. No punishment was greater for a courtier in disgrace than to be sent to live in his chateau, where he wearied out the days that passed between the arrival of each post, which brought him more news from Paris, and more hopes from Court. That Rousseau himself should live away from town and spend the winter at the Hermitage, confirmed, as we have seen, his friends in their worst fears that he was becoming mad. It was this hatred of rural life, causing the *noblesse* to desert their chateaus and their duties, which roused the animosity of the poor against the rich, who neglected them, and ultimately led to some of the worst evils of the Revolution. Rousseau laments the misery that prevailed amidst the loveliness and simplicity of the country.

"Where the taxes devour the produce of the earth, the eager avarice of the greedy tax-farmer, the inflexible severity of the inhuman master, impair the beauty of the prospect. The jaded horses near dying of blows, and the unhappy peasants emaciated with hunger, worn out by fatigue, covered with rags, are deplorable sights, and make one regret to be a man, when one thinks of the unfortunate beings whose blood it is necessary to consume."

It must be remembered when Rousseau is charged with encouraging the excesses of the Revolution by his other writings, that if his eloquent pleading for the poor had been more listened to, if those who had admired his sentiment had followed his counsel, the Revolution would have lost much of its terror.

Not merely was it the charm of rural life which Jean Jacques painted for the first time;—to him is due almost the discovery of the beauty of scenery, in its uncultivated freedom. When he wrote, people preferred to see nature in fancy dress,—the rectilinear walks in gardens, where yews were cut into figures of dragons, boxwood into forms of umbrellas. At a time during which Walpole said, "When a Frenchman speaks of the Garden of Eden, he thinks of Versailles," Rousseau described the tangled luxuriance of Madame de Wolmar's "elysium" at Clarens, painting with loving hand its variety of shrubs and flowers, its simple wealth of nature, full of innumerable birds with their varied song and manifold plumage. All this is commonplace to us, but it was a daring novelty at a time when, as he scornfully says, if a rich man had such a place, he would get "an architect who is paid dear to spoil nature," and try to make it beautiful by rendering it fantastic. Such, till Rousseau spoke, was the taste of that artificial age,

which despised alike the country and men if uncultivated—an age when the fashionable Boucher painted his pictures in a boudoir hung with rose-coloured satin, and found nature "too green and badly lighted."

Until Rousseau revealed to the eyes of society a new world of beauty, as by the touch of a magician's wand, nature in its wilder and grander aspects was even less admired and as little appreciated as Gothic architecture, which then was considered barbarous. Even in our own country the taste had not yet been formed. White of Selborne speaks of "the vast range of mountains called the Sussex downs," which those Englishmen who shuddered at the Alps could admire; but Gray considers Mont Cenis "frightful;" Goldsmith complains that in Scotland "hills and rocks intercept every prospect," and "every part of the country presents the same dismal landscape;" and John Wilkes, when on the Grand Tour, can only say the Apennines are "not near so high and horrid as the Alps." Quite as little was nature, in its imposing aspects, admired on the Continent, even at Geneva, where the trees were generally planted so as to obscure the view of the lake. It was the beauties of Alpine scenery, though not in its wildest aspects, which Rousseau was the first to love, and the first to make the world admire. In the presence of the mountains he felt his heart invigorated. Instead of merely echoing his melancholy moods, as we might expect, they raised him far above them all.

"Our meditations gain a character of sublimity and grandeur, proportioned to the objects around us. It seems as if, being lifted above all the haunts of men, we had left every low earthly feeling behind, and that, as we

approach the ethereal regions, the soul imbibes something of their eternal purity. We are grave without being melancholy, tranquil without being indolent, content merely to exist and to think; our passions lose their painful violence, and leave only a gentle emotion in our breasts. . . . In short, there is something magical in these mountainous prospects which ravish both senses and mind: one forgets everything, one forgets one's self."

Very different was this healthy feeling from that of Byron, who never forgot himself and his woes, even in the presence of scenes like these. "Neither the music of the shepherd," he wrote, "the crashing of the avalanche, the torrent, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty and the power and the glory around, above, beneath me." Yet Rousseau seemed to have forgotten his cares whenever he was in presence of the outward world; and none like him, the greatest prose poet of his century, loved so passionately, or painted with more beauty, the loveliness of the quiet country, and the grand aspects of nature. It is to his inspiration that are due the landscapes of St Pierre's 'Paul and Virginia,' the magnificent descriptions in Chateaubriand's 'Atala' and 'René,' the pensive pictures of Senancour's 'Obermann.' It is in the spirit of Rousseau that Wordsworth was affected by that harmony which he found between the heart of man and nature. The homelier pictures, the domestic scenes, described by Jean Jacques so fully, obviously suggested much of 'Werther,' which appeared in 1774, and gave only too great an impetus to the sentimental school in Germany.

Rousseau said that the purpose of his romance was to show that one might believe in a God without being a hypocrite, and be an unbeliever without being a knave —for he had not yet quarrelled entirely with the philosophers. But this object, if not an after-thought, is a very subsidiary one. It is not the piety of Julie, or the unbelief of Wolmar (said to have been meant to represent D'Holbach), which remains in the memory. These, which occupy a very small after-part of the book, are lost sight of in the scenes of passionate love in the first portion, and the pictures of country home-life in the last. No one can understand the 'New Héloïse' who has not read the 'Confessions,' for Rousseau lives in his characters as he speaks in their words. The egoistic St Preux, both when uttering his love-rhapsodies and his bitter notes on society, writes like Jean Jacques himself. "Julie," as St Marc Girardin remarks, "in her sins and in her repentance, is the history of Rousseau re-made and corrected by his imagination; it is his life such as he would have lived it. To sin, and to repair the sin by repenting, is the fundamental idea of Julie's history; it is also the idea which seems to rule Rousseau all his days." Julie, Bomston, Wolmar, however they may differ in character and condition from Jean Jacques, are at times mere mouthpieces of his sentiments and opinions on social and moral questions. He had little dramatic power, but what his work in consequence loses as a work of art, it gains in psychological interest, because it gives not merely the imaginary views of imaginary beings, but the real opinions of one whose most foolish as well as wisest words had immense weight in his day, and have still deep interest in ours.

CHAPTER VIII.

'THE SOCIAL CONTRACT; OR, PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RIGHTS.'

In France, before Rousseau published the 'Contrat Social,' political thinkers had been very cautious, simply because the utterance of bold political opinions was very dangerous. Views which were mere commonplaces in this country, were revolutionary sentiments there; and advocacy of the rights of the people was at once regarded as an infringement of the rights of the State, although most of the prosecution against free thought was at the instigation of the Church. It is always the case under a despotism, that matters are suspected to be in a critical state, if any dare to criticise them. Therefore, when writers of mark chose to ventilate popular notions, or to censure monarchical institutions, they were cautious enough either to write apologues, or to write without their name, and then deny the authorship; or to publish their works in Holland, and smuggle them into France in bales of goods, or in casks of provisions, so that under the innocent label of "black and white peas" might be a consignment of books which were in danger of being burned by the executioner, and

whose author was in danger of lodging in the Bastille. As time went on the people gained courage. "Sire," said the Marshal de Richelieu to Louis XVI., "under Louis XIV. no one dared to speak; under Louis XV. people whispered; under your Majesty they speak aloud." The brilliant writers of the Encyclopedia were meanwhile with ingenious precaution spreading free thought, and giving opinions on the very foundations of morals, religion, and politics. When Rousseau wrote, however, it was still dangerous to "speak aloud;" but none spoke so boldly, none so plainly as he, on the bases of society and government. When we bear in mind how disregarded were the people, how privileged were the *noblesse*, how sacred were the kings, we can understand the immense impression made by the Republican views of the 'Social Contract,' expressed with a force, a precision, and a telling clearness of style and thought seldom before equalled.

In order to understand the position held by this famous work—which proclaims the dogma of the "sovereignty of the people,"—in the history of political doctrine, it is necessary to glance at the development of some of the leading views and theories which it contains. Long familiar with the views of Grotius and of Puffendorf, whose works he had read at Charmettes, it was, however, chiefly from England that Rousseau drew inspiration, for there a succession of political writers had expressed more or less definitely those views which he formed into a political creed. Hooker held that the power of the ruler is derived from a contract between the prince and the people, although he did not support the right to depose the ruler if by his tyranny he broke the

contract,—in this agreeing with the views afterwards expressed by Grotius, and later still by Puffendorf. Then came Hobbes, who, in curious contrast to Rousseau, looked upon a state of nature as a state of war, because in that condition no visible power exists to control the passions and selfish desires of men. This state can only be changed by all transferring their power to one man, or company of men, "as if each should say to each: I concede to this man or company of men my authority and right of ruling myself, on condition that thou also transfer to the same person all thy authority and right of governing thyself." But Hobbes—and Spinoza, whose political views so closely accord with his—denied that the absolute ruler can be deposed by the citizens, for he had made no pact with those who gave him the power; and besides, each of those who gave the power is the author of all the actions of him on whom the power was bestowed. In this respect it will be seen how much he differs from Rousseau and others to whose teaching Rousseau was so much indebted. Locke seems to have influenced most of all the Genevese philosopher; and the calm views of the 'Treatise on Government' find their bold, if not logical, conclusions in the impassioned reasoning of the 'Social Contract.' His opinion that there exists a pact between the prince and the people, the breach of which engagement on the part of the former justifies rebellion, became part of the orthodox Whig creed, and was formally accepted by Parliament when it declared that James II. had tried to subvert the constitution by breaking the original contract. The doctrine of "passive obedience" in England was shaken by the Revolution, which deposed a king; the

doctrine of "divine right" was shaken by the Hanoverian succession, which changed a dynasty, while the stanch supporters of non-resistance were only found amongst High Churchmen like Bishops Kettlewell and Ken, who called it devoutly "the doctrine of the Cross." But in France no events had yet occurred to destroy the old faith: the same dynasty continued, associated with all that was greatest in the country's history; and the faults and vices of the kings no more affected it in the minds of many than the vices of the popes affected the infallibility of the Papacy. The Gallican Church was keenly monarchical, and the clergy were still in harmony with the opinion of Bossuet, who preached that kings were "sacred things," and that even if the rulers were "as wolves," the Christians "should be as sheep."

It remained for Rousseau to change the sedate arguments of publicists into a revolutionary explosive, and to apply doctrines which had been innocuous in England to deadly effect in France. It is remarkable that the opinions which proved most destructive across the Channel were imported from this country, where they were harmless. The deism and "free-thinking" of Chubb, Toland, and Tindal, which only met with hot argument from the clergy, and cool indifference from the laity, when adopted by men like Voltaire helped to sap the faith of society and the institutions of the French people. The political opinions of Locke and Sydney, which had only served quietly to depose a king, when adopted by men like Rousseau, went to overturn ruthlessly the whole constitution of France.

In sketching the opinions held before Rousseau, we can

easily see how much was old, how much was original, in his famous doctrine. We know now that all this talk by Grotius, Hobbes, and Locke of a "social contract" is futile,—that it never was made, and never could have been kept. But theorists, like nature, abhor a vacuum, and the theory helped to account for existing facts. Writers up to Rousseau lived in a pre-scientific age of history; the past—except through classic literature, of which the myths were accepted as truths—was unknown: it was a blank space, in which every thinker either put his theories or found them. Where now we deliberately examine every historical tradition, and, by the aid of comparative sociology and ethnology, search into the conditions of primitive life, and the origin of early institutions,—they gravely cited Lycurgus and Minos as models, quoted Livy for their prehistoric facts, and Plato for their political theories; while they framed, as Grote says of mythology, "a past which was never present." They spoke of a "state of nature" of which they knew nothing, and of a "social contract" which never existed, as confidently as if this charter of humanity was as veritable a document on parchment as the Magna Charta of England.

In this little treatise there is nothing startling in style. In its concise paragraphs, its formal propositions, there is little rhetoric to carry people away with revolutionary zeal; little invective to move them even to hatred of existing grievances. And yet the symmetry of the argument, the compactness of each clause, rendered it fatally attractive to those *esprits rectilignes* who adore formulas, and to those fanatical politicians who insisted on the "title-deeds of humanity," and sought to carry

out its teaching by overturning society. We take up the little volume now, and find it cold and harmless, like an exploded shell in an old battle-field, where once, however, it did deadly work. While we can see that its premises are false, its historical precedents fictitious, its conclusions wrong, its end impracticable, Rousseau's age found in it the very gospel of liberty, the only way to regenerate society—after an initial baptism of blood.

The first sentence strikes the shrill key-note: "Man is born free, and is everywhere enslaved." How can this loss of liberty be explained and justified? For merely to yield to superior force is an act, not of duty, but of prudence; and the need of obeying the strongest lasts only so long as he is the strongest. The pistol a robber puts to your head is a power; but it is not conscience, but fear, which makes you surrender your purse. Superior force in itself, therefore, cannot constitute any right for its being exercised, nor lay any duty on man to obey it. Seeing, then, that men are only bound to obey legitimate authority, we must find what that is. The basis of legitimate authority is found in mutual agreement,—an association which gives to the smaller number the duty of submitting to the larger. What, then, is necessary is "to find that form of association which shall protect and defend with the force of the community the person and property of each individual, and in which each remains as free as before." In this pact, never formally promulgated, but everywhere tacitly received—

"the individual, by giving himself up to all, gives himself up to none; and there is no member over whom he does not acquire the same right as that which he gives up him-

self. He gains an equivalent for what he loses, and a still greater power to preserve what he has. If, therefore, we take from the social contract everything which is not essential to it, we shall find it reduced to the following terms: Each of us puts his person and his power under the superior direction of the general will of all, and, as a collective body, receives each member into that body as an indivisible part of the whole."

Rousseau does not show how this mythical contract could be binding on successive generations who never made it; or why it could not be dissolved by the parties who entered into it. Rousseau himself objects to Grotius's theory that a people could give themselves up to a despot, on the ground that in doing so they have no power to bind their descendants to be slaves; but he forgets that this objection holds equally against his own theory. Jefferson, who admired so greatly the system, saw this difficulty practically in America, and consistently proposed that every nineteen years, when a new constituency has sprung up, a fresh constitution should be submitted to the people—thus making, as a critic remarked, the life of a state shorter than that of a horse. Logically the theory led to disastrous results, and Marat was consistent in his truculent way, when, from the popular premise that society was founded upon voluntary agreement, which was terminable on sufficient reason, he drew his wild conclusions in the time of the Revolution, and told the famishing people of Paris that the conditions on which they consented to bear evil and refrain from violence were broken. "It is suicide to starve," he exclaimed; "it is murder to see one's children starving by the crime of the rich. The bonds of society are now dissolved by cruel

wrong; the state of nature has come back in which each has a right to take what he can; and the time has come for the rich to make way for the poor." To such dangerous conclusions were the quiet maxims of Jean Jacques destined to be reduced.

Rousseau, proceeding further to develop his system, passes on to government, and gives a theory which the revolutionary leaders carried literally into legislative practice. The Sovereignty, being only the exercise of the general will, is "inalienable," and the Sovereign being the collective body of the people, cannot be represented except by itself. For the same reason that it is inalienable, it is also "indivisible." It is a mistake to divide it into legislative and executive power,—into powers of taxation, of justice, of war, of foreign and home administration. As it clearly belongs to the contracting parties to settle the conditions on which they agree to form a society, the people who submit to the laws—which are the conditions—should be the authors of them. The social contract gives to the body politic absolute power over all its members; and it is this power, directed by the general will, to which is attached the name of Sovereignty. Therefore the general will is always right; for there is no individual citizen who is included under it who does not consider himself in voting for all. In this way an act of sovereignty is not an agreement between a superior and an inferior, but a convention between the whole body and each of its members.

The question now rises, What is Government? It is the intermediate body established between each subject and the sovereign people for their mutual correspondence,

charged with the execution of the laws or with the maintenance of civil and political liberty. This body charged with the administration is called the Prince or Magistrate. As the ruling will of the Prince is nothing else than the general will, the power of the Prince is that of the public centred in him. He cannot be absolute or independent of the people; for if he makes his will more active than the Sovereign (the people), and enforces obedience to it, there would be two sovereigns, one by right, the other in fact, and then the social union would vanish and the body politic would be dissolved. This government, which executes the popular will, may be of different forms, provided the prince or governing body is the servant of the citizens. The democratical—that is, one in the hands of the whole or the great part of the people—is best suited for small states; the aristocratical for moderate-sized states; the monarchical for large countries. "But, in the true sense of the term, a pure democracy never existed in this world;" for it is not possible for a whole people to remain personally assembled to manage their own affairs, and the moment deputies or representatives are appointed, the form of the administration is changed. "Did there exist a nation of gods, their government would doubtless be democratical; it is too perfect for mankind." Rousseau inclines towards an elective aristocracy of the best citizens as the best form of government; although a monarchy may be best adapted to large countries. But if government is difficult under any form, what must it be under a single person? And everybody knows what happens when a king reigns by substitutes; for those who make their way to high posts under him are "men of little minds and mean talents,

who owe their preferment to the meretricious arts of flattery and intrigue." "A man of real merit is almost as rare in the ministry of a monarchy as a fool at the head of a republican government." And yet it is found better, in order to avoid the turbulence and disputes involved in the choice of good kings by election, to run the risk of having, under hereditary monarchy, the throne filled by monsters and by idiots.

"Almost everything conspires to deprive a man brought up to command others of the principles of reason and justice. Great pains are taken, it is said, to teach young princes the art of reigning; it does not, however, appear that they profit much by their education. . . . The greatest monarchs are those who have never been trained to rule. It is a science of which those know least who have learned it only too much, and it is acquired better by studying obedience than command."

Rousseau does not content himself with uttering aphorisms and formulating abstract principles, but he enters into minute statistical and social details to support his views, and to indicate what forms of government suit particular countries, according to their food and water supply, their area, their degrees of fertility, their climate. As in warmer climates fewer inhabitants are required for the purposes of production than in colder regions, it is more practicable there to have a despotism. The more thinly peopled the land and the more widely scattered the population, the more easy is it to control them, and the less easy is it for them to combine against the Government: while, in a denser population, men are nearer to each other, and it is more difficult for the ruler to usurp the sovereignty; "the chiefs deliberate in their rooms

as easily as the prince in his council, the mob gathers in the square as soon as the troops in their quarters." "The least populated countries are in this way most suitable for tyranny; wild beasts reign only in deserts."

It is apparent, then, that to the question, What is the best form of government to carry out the will of the people? there can be no decisive reply, for "it may be answered in as many ways as there are possible combinations of absolute and relative circumstances of the people." While, to the question whether a people is well or ill governed, he finds an easy answer. "Since the end of political society is the preservation and prosperity of its members, that government is best under which the citizens increase, and that the worst under which they diminish." It thus becomes a mere matter of statistics.

The author then passes on to discuss how sovereign authority is to be maintained, and how its voice is to be uttered.

"The sovereign, being no other force than the legislative power, acts only by laws; and the laws being only the authoritative acts of the general will, the sovereign cannot act unless the people be assembled. 'The people assemble!' you will say, 'what a chimera!' It is indeed chimerical at present, although it was not considered so two thousand years ago. By what has been done before, however, we may judge of what may be done again."

He points out how the Roman *comitia*, the little republics of Greece, and even monarchical Macedonia, had their popular assemblies; and, as Mr Morley has remarked, Rousseau might have instanced such little states familiar to him as Uri and Appenzell, where the sovereign people, each in his own person, exercises both the duties of legislation and choice of executive. "It

is necessary that the people should have fixed and periodical meetings, which nothing can abolish or prorogue, so that the people should, on a certain day, be legally summoned without express statute being required for the formal convocation." But even if this mode were best, how is it practicable? It may suit a town or a very tiny Swiss canton, or, better still, a minute republic like San Marino, and is partly realised in the village communes which linger in Russia to-day; but how can it work in a larger state, with many cities within its bounds? Rousseau's reply is simple,—so much the worse for the large states. "It is an objection of no force against one who maintains the exclusive propriety of small ones: besides, if the state be kept within due bounds, there remains the resource of not allowing the existence of a capital, but removing the seat of government from one town to another, and assembling the states of the country in each alternately." In all this, it will be seen, he reasons on the basis of his population of 10,000, as in the ideal republic of Plato; he still thinks of his native Geneva, with its short distances, its small population, its simple administration. But as a system for general application, it is of course utterly unworkable; and even on the principles of federation, it could only, to a very limited extent, be carried into practice. The Girondists thought of federalising France,—in this probably following the example of America rather than the doctrine of Rousseau,—but in their effort they were opposed by the Jacobins. Only once was his plan tried, and that only in municipal administration, when Danton, in 1790,[1] promoted a scheme for the sections to sit permanently, the vote to be taken day

[1] Morley's Rousseau, ii. 164.

by day, and action to follow their decrees. But it is easy to see that the speculation as to citizens gathering at a common meeting to legislate, is as impracticable as Aristotle's speculation as to whether citizens of a state should dine at a common table. Rousseau considered that everything connected with government should be done by the direct action of citizens, who should pass the laws of the state, and work for its preservation.

"When the service of the public ceases to be the principal concern of the citizens, and they would rather discharge it by their purses than their persons, the state is already far on the road to ruin. When they should march to fight, they pay troops to fight for them and stay at home; when they should go to council, they send deputies and stay at home: thus, in consequence of their indolence and wealth, they in the end employ soldiers to enslave their country, and representatives to sell it. So soon as a citizen says, What are state affairs to me? the state may be given up for lost."

Ignoring the fact that political representation on the part of the people is the result of public spirit, he insists that "the want of public spirit and the influence of private interest have given rise to the method of assembling the people by deputies." He forgets that in most countries the people could not relinquish, for they had never possessed, this power of governing and administrating for themselves, and the liberty of representation has only been gained by arduous efforts, by feats of moral and physical force throughout the course of centuries. As the sovereignty cannot be represented or alienated —for it consists of the public will—Rousseau maintains that "the deputies are only commissioners, not representatives, and every law not confirmed by the people in person is null and void."

With the exception of the primitive contract which demands unanimous consent, the determination of the majority on every question, we are told, is always binding upon the rest. When a law is proposed in the assembly of the people, they are not asked severally whether they approve of the proposal or not, but whether it is conformable or not to the general will, each person giving his vote on this point, and by counting the votes the declaration of the general will is inferred from the majority. Here follows a characteristic instance of Rousseau's ingenuity in making a case which seems to confute his theory support it: "When a law passes contrary to my own opinion, it only proves that I was mistaken in what I believed to be the public will; so that, if my particular advice had been followed, it would have been contrary to my will, which, as a citizen, is the same as the general, and in that case I should not have been free." In his system he seeks rather political equality than social equality, while recognising the truth that social prosperity can only progress by distribution of wealth amongst as many as possible,—as Washington, on abolishing the custom of primogeniture in Virginia, when warned that there would be no carriages-and-four, replied that there would be all the more carriages-and-two. Rousseau, while insisting on liberty and equality as the end of all legislation, qualifies the terms: "By equality we do not mean that all individuals shall have the same degree of wealth and power, but only, with respect to the former, that no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another, and that none shall be so poor as to be obliged to sell himself."

From such a writer we naturally expect a strong de-

nunciation of slavery, especially as the savage races, according to him, are nearer perfection than the civilised races that enslave them. Montesquieu had consistently spoken of slavery as immoral and unchristian. But this we do not find in Rousseau; on the contrary, he sees that the Greeks had great political freedom, because they had slaves to do their work, and had therefore leisure to assemble under the sunny sky to discuss and pass laws instead of sending mere deputies. "What! can liberty only be maintained by aid of servitude? Perhaps. The two extremes meet, and such is one of the inconveniences of civil society, that we can only procure liberty at the expense of another. You modern people have no slaves, but you are slaves yourselves, and pay for their liberty by your own." It is strange that this is all, with exception of a general argument against a people being enslaved by a tyrant, that the apostle of liberty has to say; but it is not more strange than that other writers who have furthered the political freedom of the people said nothing in condemnation of slavery. From the days when Sir John Hawkins began the English trade in negroes, in that ship gravely christened "The Jesus," people of all shades of opinion shared this political blindness. Locke maintained equal rights of men, and drew up the constitution for Carolina, investing free men with authority over negroes. Whitfield and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had property in slaves; John Newton owns that he never had such hours of sweet divine communion as during his slave voyages to Guinea. Washington, having freed his country, bequeathed his slaves to his wife; St Pierre, in his idyllic story, repre-

sents Paul and Virginia served by faithful slaves in their earthly paradise. It is not remarkable, then, that Rousseau should not do what the stanchest maintainers of liberty in France, England, and America left undone. The claims of consistent humanity, however, were at last uttered in France by Abbé Raynal in his work on the Indies, in 1772, with noble persistency; by Condorcet, who demanded that negroes and Indians should be brought within the pale of brotherhood; but only when the terrible insurrection of the negroes in St Domingo, in 1791, took place, were even revolutionists convinced that the "rights of man" could possibly belong to blacks.

We must now refer to Rousseau's views on political religion, which, in their very inconsistency, are so consistent with his own practice, and which were destined to be carried into action in the swiftly coming revolution. He passes in review the social influence of various religions; he sees in Roman Catholicism a mere religion of priests, which can only dissolve society, and which, in its effort to make devotees, unmakes citizens. Christianity, in its original form, is also prejudicial to the state. It is a spiritual, anti-social religion—for every true Christian is bound to neglect the earth and prepare for heaven. If the country prosper, he dares not rejoice, lest he be proud; if it decline, he dares not repine, but must see the hand of Providence that humbles: he must not resist wrong, must not speak evil of dignities, and must submit to the tyrant as to the chastening rod of God. In all this Rousseau does not mean to discredit Christianity in saying it was unsuited to society, for he regarded the social state as an evil, though now it has become a

necessity: he simply considered consistent Christianity as inconsistent with political existence. It is all-important, he urges, that the citizen should be of a religion which inspires him with a regard for his social duties, and the community is concerned in what he believes only in so far as relates to morals and the obligation under which he lies to his fellow-citizens. Beyond this the individual may believe what he chooses without the sovereign being entitled to interfere; for, "having no jurisdiction in the other world, it is nothing to the sovereign what becomes of the citizens in a future state, provided they discharge their duties in the present." Accordingly, there should be a common political profession of faith, the articles of which the sovereign must fix, not precisely as dogmas of religion, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good citizen or a good subject. "Without being compelled to adopt these sentiments, any one may be banished from the society, not as impious, but as unsociable, as incapable of having a sincere regard for justice, and of sacrificing his life to his duty if required." Again, should any one, after having made a public profession of such sentiments, betray his disbelief of them by his conduct,

"he may fairly be punished with death for having committed the greatest of all crimes,—he has lied in the face of the laws. The tenets of political religion should be few and simple; they should be laid down with precision and without comment. The existence of a Deity, powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident; a future state, the reward of the righteous, the punishment of the wicked, the sacred nature of the social contract and of the laws,—these should be its positive tenets. As to negative dogmas, I limit

them to one,—it is intolerance. Those who affect to make a distinction between civil and religious intolerance are in my opinion mistaken. These two intolerances are inseparable. It is impossible to live in peace with those whom we firmly believe devoted to damnation; to love them would be to hate God who punishes them. It is therefore absolutely necessary for us either to torment or to convert them. Wherever theological intolerance is admitted, it is impossible that it should not have some civil effect; and so soon as it has, the sovereign is no longer sovereign even in secular matters; the priests become the real masters, and kings are only their officers. . . . Whoever dares to say, *Beyond the Church there is no salvation*, ought to be chased from the State."

With this dictum, which would logically result in the persecution of the whole Catholic Church on the ground that it is religiously bound to persecute, the 'Social Contract' closes, appropriately ending in a shrill cry of political fanaticism, destined to be echoed before many years had fled. If this doctrine had been pushed to its natural conclusion, the persecution the writer forbids to the Church must have been remorseless when carried out by the State on his principle: the Catholics would have been killed because they held "there was no salvation beyond the Church;" the whole circle of philosophers would have been killed who denied a God or doubted a future state; and the only citizens spared would have been cowards who concealed their own opinions, or fanatics who punished the opinions of others. Political bigotry is thus far more deadly, because far more powerful, than religious intolerance; and more preposterous than for the priests to make belief in the Trinity an article of salvation, was it for politicians to make re-

publican belief in the "social contract" an article of life and death. Yet elsewhere, whatever the consistency may be, Rousseau had written,[1] "No true believer can be a persecutor. If I were a magistrate, and the law inflicted death on atheists, I should begin to put it into execution by burning the first man who should accuse or persecute another." It would have been infinitely wiser if he had thought of the plan of Charles Fox, who declared in Parliament that "it was his wish to extirpate heresy by fire,—not, however, by burning the victims, but by burning the noxious Acts."

It must, of course, be remembered that Rousseau was not singular in his theoretical intolerance, and many calm writers who had shared his political principles shared also his repressive views. In England, for instance, Hobbes long before had taught in the 'Leviathan' a uniformity of faith as strict as Jean Jacques, and said that "the right of judging what doctrines are useful for the conservation of peace, and what ought to be publicly taught, belongs inseparably to the civil power;" but then, what was somewhat cynical Erastianism in Hobbes was keen fanaticism in Rousseau. Locke himself, advocate though he was for toleration, was as decided as Edmund Burke, who maintained that "atheists ought not to be tolerated, as denying the very principles in virtue of which human relations are possible." When we remember that the French Parliament and Church deemed Rousseau's own religious and political views dangerous to society, on his own grounds they were thoroughly justified in banishing him, and every act of persecution could be vindicated on his own terms.

[1] La Nouvelle Héloïse, Let. 141.

With terrible effect, his doctrine was afterwards to be acted upon by a powerful party. In 1793, the section headed by Robespierre denounced the atheistic Hébertists who had desecrated churches and set up for worship the Goddess of Reason; and they accused Hébert, Chaumette, and Anacharsis Clootz of conspiring "to destroy all notion of divinity, and to base the government of France on atheism," for which crime they were guillotined.

The argument of Rousseau in this book is, like that of so many of his school, entirely conducted in the *a priori* method.[1] He laid down certain axioms, supposed an abstract man with imaginary rights based on an imaginary compact, and, irrespective of all historical facts, deduced an ideal political system, which never can be realised. It is admirable in symmetry; it is fascinating in its logical simplicity. The rights insisted upon are all "based on nature;" they are all found in "the nature of things;"—phrases which, however imposing, engender suspicion, and make one as sceptical as Lord Ellenborough, who, on hearing an advocate protesting of a principle being written in the "book of nature," stopped him, and gravely asked, "On what page?" Yet it was these general formulas which were so greedily adopted by the French followers of Rousseau, and which were applauded in the streets of Paris and in the Convention. In fanatical accordance with metaphysical conceptions, and in utter ignorance of human nature, the National Assembly tried to form a Constitution, not for Frenchmen but for abstract men. So captivating were its easy solutions of social problems, that the 'Social Contract' became the gospel of the revo-

[1] H. Taine: Ancien Régime, B. III. ch. iv.

lutionary era. Men like Marat, in 1788, recited it in the streets of Paris, while enthusiastic crowds applauded; at meetings it was quoted and paraphrased by every Demosthenes of the *cabaret;* young lawyers espoused the ideal polity of this publicist of the future; soldiers read it in their barracks; mechanics regarded it as the charter of their order; artists and artisans, clergy, journalists, were enraptured by its inflamed logic.

These democratic opinions, when uttered by Rousseau, became fashionable in the drawing-rooms before they became popular in the streets; nobles who in their hearts despised both peasantry and *bourgeoisie* took upon their lips the current phrases of brotherhood and equality, though they all the while would heartily have sympathised with Mirabeau, who, on returning from voting for the abolition of titles of nobility, took his servant by the ear, and bawled with his big voice,—"Look you, fellow; I trust that to you at least I shall always be monsieur le comte." Phrases which sounded piquant and daring from the aristocracy of France, sounded very differently, however, when rudely repeated, thirty years later, by the orators of the mob, who were not satisfied until they had levelled all ranks, and until, having the king himself in their power, they could truly say, "Formerly there were twenty-six million subjects and one master; now there are twenty-six million kings and one subject."

Napoleon went so far as to say that, without Rousseau, there would have been no Revolution. It is clear now, however, that for more than half a century before 1789 there were signs of political unrest which tended to a revolutionary crisis. D'Argenson, in 1752, had

foretold a coming revolt; Voltaire, in 1764, we find writing to M. de Chauvelin, "Everything I see shows the seed of revolution which will infallibly come: young people are lucky; they will see fine things." Menaces broke forth from the masses, impatient of suffering, year after year. There were riots in the provinces; there were fierce protests in local parliaments; there were outrages innumerable by men whom rage and poverty had rendered desperate. Revolt had been in the air for long years, and soon the spirit of equality breathed not merely among angry groups in the *cabarets*, in pamphlets, and in the Encyclopedia, but in literature of all classes,—alike in Raynal's 'History of the Indies,' in Beaumarchais's 'Figaro,' in St Pierre's pastorals, in D'Holbach's 'System of Nature.' But certainly none had so great an influence as Rousseau in furthering the national insurrection and in shaping its doctrines. Encyclopedists incited the public mind to see the injustice of established institutions, and rendered men impatient of their yoke; but they did not appeal, like Rousseau, to popular passion. Voltaire sought to emancipate society from traditional opinions, and to slay intolerance by showing its folly; but he did not, like Rousseau, kindle the people's enthusiasm. In fact, though liberal enough in political and religious opinion, Voltaire was conservative in society and a would-be aristocrat, with a contemptuous kindliness for the masses. "They are stupid and barbarous," he said; "they are oxen who need only a goad, the yoke, and some hay." Nor did the seigneur of Ferney love demagogues. "Preach virtue to the lower orders; where the populace meddle with reasoning they are lost." No wonder that Rousseau

— a prophet who loved the people and desired their salvation—was honoured by democrats, who adopted his doctrine. In his own words, Robespierre proclaimed, "The sovereignty resides in the people; it is one, indivisible, unprescriptible, and inalienable." In 1794, the Jacobins would fain have reconstituted society on the ruins of the *ancien régime*, and given to the people the perfect republic of Rousseau. But while thinking to legislate for twenty-six millions with the ease of a Lycurgus for a few Spartans, and with the success of Calvin in Geneva, they forgot that a new constitution needed a new people; they forgot that it was impossible to alter by statute immemorial customs, or to uproot the traditions and feelings of centuries. Yet Rousseau was more cautious than his admirers. He has himself shown that laws must be made to suit the people, the climate, the country, and the age, else they will injure the nation, or fail as utterly as the premature reforms of Peter the Great in Russia. Few countries, he held, were able to receive a brand-new system of laws, for they must have no customs too deeply rooted; they "must have the consistency of an old nation and the docility of a new one." Then he adds words which seem an unconscious prophecy,—"not of private interpretation:"—

"There is still one country in Europe capable of receiving laws. That is the island of Corsica. The valour and constancy with which this brave people recovered and have defended their liberty ought to incite some wise men to teach them how to preserve it. I cannot help surmising that this little island will one day or other be the astonishment of Europe."

These words of course refer to the recent struggle

under General Paoli. Four years afterwards, in 1765, Rousseau was asked by Corsican leaders who remembered these words to form a constitution for the island; and it is curious to think how different would have been the political aspect of Europe to-day had the Duc de Choiseul, instead of adding Corsica to France in 1768, allowed the liberal constitution of Rousseau to be established in the island. Buonaparte would have possibly lived on obscurely in his little republic, and certainly never served in a French army. But instead of France giving a constitution to Corsica, a Corsican was one day to give a code to France.

George Sand has said that the 'Social Contract' is no more responsible for the excesses of the Revolution than the Gospel is for the massacre of St Bartholomew; and that is true, so far as direct intention went. But the leaders of the Revolution were able to draw their conclusions logically from Rousseau, which the leaders of the massacre certainly could not do from the Gospel. He had urged that when an individual enters into society, he surrenders his rights to the control of the state of which he himself is a part. In a small state of ten thousand members, each has only a ten-thousandth part of the authority, although even that is submitted to the rest. Accordingly, in a country like France, the citizen who had given himself to the state had only a twenty-six millionth part of authority in the community; whence it follows, as Rousseau acknowledged, that as the state increases individual liberty diminishes. It is not wonderful, then, that Robespierre and St Just, seeing that the state is practically everything and the individual citizen nothing, held that the republic could dictate to

republicans what it thought best, in actions and opinions, for the public good.[1] "Every individual who opposes himself to the general will ought to be restrained by the whole body, which signifies nothing else than that they force him to be free." In this way we arrive at that password of those who coerced the man for the good of the state,—"liberty, equality, and fraternity—or death." No one would have abhorred such a conclusion, and condemned the existence of the Committee of Public Safety, or the Revolutionary tribunal, in the Reign of Terror, more than Jean Jacques. In his discourse on Political Economy, he had said that the idea that "it is permitted to a Government to sacrifice one innocent man for the safety of the multitude, I hold to be the most execrable maxim that ever tyrant invented;" and elsewhere he wrote, "The blood of one single man is more precious than the liberty of the whole human race." It is easy to conclude that, had he lived in the Revolutionary time, he would not have escaped a fate which befell his most uncompromising followers, Robespierre and St Just.[2] Whatever its consequences, the people —proud of that title of "citizens" which Rousseau

[1] St Marc Girardin's Rousseau, ii. 384.

[2] The effect of Rousseau's political doctrines was not confined to France, and they fascinated some at least of the founders of the United States, especially Jefferson. The framers of the Declaration of Independence embodied the very principles which he maintained: "We hold these truths to be self-evident,—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." These words, drawn from the principles of French jurists and politicians, after being embodied in the American Constitution, came back to France with a *prestige* and realised significance.—See Maine's Ancient Law, p. 94.

had claimed for them—were soon eager to accept his doctrine, not perceiving that nothing is so irrational as a constitution founded on reasoning. Frederick the Great was clearer-sighted when, on reading D'Holbach's 'System of Nature,' he exclaimed, "If I had a province to punish, I would give it to philosophers to govern."

CHAPTER IX.

'EMILE, OR EDUCATION.'

THAT Rousseau should write a book on education struck many with amused astonishment. The man who had placed his own children in a foundling hospital was the last whom one would expect to discourse on the best manner of training the young; and yet the extraordinary observation of child-life which 'Emile' displays could only come, as he said himself, from one who loved children. "If I have made any progress in the knowledge of the human heart, it is owing to the pleasure I have experienced in seeing and observing children." Indeed it was the thoughts with which his own deficiency in regard to his children filled him, which, he asserts, made him think out his treatise on education. For years he had been building up his educational theories, which were only a development of his favourite views on society, that man is naturally good, and that institutions have made him bad, and that he must be set free from the prejudices and conventions of society. These notions run through all his writings, especially through what he calls his "three principal works"—the two Discourses and 'Emile'—"which books are inseparable,

and form together one whole." Madame d'Epinay was a little addicted to educational plans, and had written out letters to her son, which Rousseau, with his unpleasant candour, said were "excellent, madame, but of no use." One day she was talking upon the manner in which her tutor trained her son. "It is a difficult thing," said she, "to educate a child." "I think so indeed, madame," replied Rousseau; "it is because fathers and mothers are not made by nature to educate—nor children to be educated." And as she looked astonished at his paradox, he explained that in a state of nature the human being has only a few physical wants to be provided for, and therefore the education of the savage takes place without interference from others, while our artificial state is not based upon nature, but founded on absurd and contradictory conventions. "To facilitate your work of education," said Jean Jacques, calmly, in his uncompromising way, "you must begin by remoulding society." Accordingly, in 'Emile' he himself begins to remould society by moulding the individual.

When Rousseau wrote there was little home-training by parents, except among the *bourgeoisie*; education was left in the hands of tutors in families, or committed to priests at colleges. Many persons in France about 1762, when 'Emile' appeared, were already becoming interested in education. The philosophers had said too much against priests for society to trust them implicitly. The Jesuits, the great educationalists of Europe, were growing into disfavour; but as fathers did not trouble themselves much about the matter, it was left to clever women like Madame d'Epinay or Madame de Grafigny to form

plans for education—plans which were sometimes amusing in their sonorous maxims, and their utter ignorance of childhood. Now, however, Rousseau lifted up his voice against the pedantic follies of existing modes of training; but, unlike Locke, who, in his 'Thoughts on Education,' had long ago sought to form a "young gentleman," his purpose was to form a "man."

It must be owned that 'Emile' is not a work to be read through with pleasure: some may even call it wellnigh intolerable, except to those who study it as an epoch-making book, powerful in influencing religious, political, and social opinion in an important age, and which, amidst fatiguing digressions and endless details, contains those wise lessons on education which the wisest educationalists were long afterwards reverently to adopt. It is enough of a story to spoil it as a treatise, and far more than enough of a treatise to spoil it as a story. The author has elsewhere remarked: "It is well known that every man who lays down general maxims intends them to bind every one but himself." According to this rule, in 'Emile' there are admirable lessons for the nursery from one who had abandoned his own children; eloquent laudations of married life by one who was living in concubinage with a stupid servant-woman; scornful vituperations of the rich and great by one who had received unbounded kindness from persons of wealth and rank; and patient studies in tuition by one who had utterly failed as a teacher.

Before he enters upon his work, Rousseau pleads with all his eloquent persuasiveness in favour of a reformation of the home-life of French society. He saw around him, amongst those who spent their time in fashion, luxury,

and pleasure, no calm, simple domesticity. Children were sent to be nursed in the country, in order that the lady might be free to go through her ceaseless round of amusements. They were never trained and tended by father or mother, but sent away to the charge of priests in colleges or to convents. He points out to parents the folly and injustice of a proceeding which intrusts children in the most fragile moment of life to peasant-women, who, to attend to their work, must dispose somehow of the poor infants, and bind them in hateful and cramping bandages :—

"Gentle mothers who, disembarrassed of your infants, give yourselves up gaily to the amusements of the town, do you know meanwhile what treatment the infant in its swaddling-bands receives in the village? At the least interruption, it is hung up on a nail like a bundle of rags; and while the nurse coolly attends to her own concerns, the poor babe remains in a state of crucifixion. Children discovered in this situation are found quite purple in the face from the compression of the breast hindering the circulation of the blood, which mounts to the head : and the infant is believed to be comfortable because it is too weak to cry. I do not know how many hours a child can remain in this condition, but I doubt if it can be very long without dying. You see here one of the conveniences of swaddling." [1]

What, then, should be done?—"Mothers must nurse their own children." This is the duty he inculcates with all his influence, and which he enforced in his works, his conversation, and his letters, as being the source of domestic happiness and virtue. Others before him,

[1] Richardson, in 'Pamela' (second part), had already pleaded for mothers nursing their own children, and had condemned this swaddling in curiously similar terms.

Morelly and Buffon, had taught the same maternal duty, but all without effect; while by his pleading society was converted. What was once deemed vulgar now became the *mode*, because Jean Jacques had pronounced it right. As Buffon said, "We say the same things, and nobody heeds; but when Rousseau speaks, every one listens and obeys." Fashionable ladies began to exercise these estimable nursery duties in an ostentatious public way, and even endangered the lives of the poor children by performing them as they hurried to and from the dissipations of society.

"When mothers deign to nurse their infants, morals will reform themselves,—the feelings of nature will awaken in all hearts. The attraction of domestic life is the best antidote to bad morals. The stir of children, which some think troublesome, will become agreeable; it renders the father and mother more necessary, more dear to each other; it binds closer the conjugal bond. Let once wives become mothers, and soon men will become fathers and husbands."

He enforces powerfully on parents the neglected duty of training their children and developing their affections, instead of leaving them in the hands of servants, or in the charge of tutors, to be taught only what is useless, and equipped for the world with only what is vicious.

He now proceeds to set forth the true mode of education; a system which, by allowing nature to develop without restraint, and which, without implanting prejudices and artificial faults, enables the child to grow into a perfect citizen. Every child is born good, and it is only evil education which makes him bad. "In coming from my hands, my pupil will be neither

a magistrate, nor a soldier, nor a priest; he will be a man equal to all the changes of fortune." He supposes himself the guardian of "Emile," an orphan, well born and healthy, who is never to receive medicine, even when ill, for "physic is more pernicious than the diseases it pretends to cure." We are told what is the proper sort of nurse, the proper condition of the milk, when to wean the infant, and what to give it. The child's education begins at once, before he can speak, and when he can barely think. He is to be accustomed to the sight of ugly objects by being shown hideous masks, and taught to overcome fear by having pistols fired near his ear. He has no silver bells to play with, but poppy-heads with the rattling grains inside or little branches with leaves on them, lest he should acquire a taste for luxury from his birth; and he has no coral for his gums, but only bits of hard crust. He is to be bathed in ice-cold water, and, when able to walk, to go barefooted. He should learn to bear pain; and if he falls or cuts his finger, it is a mistake to rush to his assistance. "The evil is done, and he must bear it;" and it is better that he should hurt himself than never learn to suffer and to be brave. Though we are told "tears are the prayers of the infant," he is not to get what he cries for, for he is made a tyrant when he gets what he wants, and miserable when he cannot. To reason with a child is a practice which Rousseau considers utterly absurd, for if children can reason, we do not need to educate them at all. By talking to them in a language they do not understand, we make them satisfied with words; and while we fancy we have prevailed by rational motives, they have in reality been moved by such mo-

tives as fear, or greed, or vanity, with which we have been obliged to enforce our arguments.

"Here is a formula to which all lessons in morality which are given to children may be reduced. MASTER.—'It is not right to do that.' CHILD.—'Why is it not right?' MASTER.—'Because it is wrong.' CHILD.—'Wrong? what is that?' MASTER.—'That which is forbidden to you.' CHILD.—'Why is it wrong to do what is forbidden?' MASTER.—'You will be punished for disobeying.' CHILD.—'I shall manage that no one knows it.' MASTER.—'You will be watched.' CHILD.—'I will hide myself.' MASTER.—'They will ask you.' CHILD.—'I will tell a lie.' MASTER.—'You must not tell a lie.' CHILD.—'Why may I not tell a lie?' MASTER.—'Because it is wrong,' &c. Here is the inevitable circle; get out of it if you can. The child does not know what to make of you. . . . Nature requires children to be children before being men. . . . I would as soon have a child be five feet high, as have it exercise judgment at ten years old."

The child should be allowed to follow its own inclinations, for these are natural to him, and, therefore, always right. It is only when he exacts the services of others that he should be denied at all; and what is intended to be granted should be given as if at our pleasure alone, not in fulfilment of the child's demands. The word *no* should be a wall of brass against which, after the child has tried his strength half-a-dozen times, he will never try again. Children should be kept from using polite phrases, because they become more exacting, by fancying they will get what they ask for most civilly. They should not say "if you please," for that is only a polite way of arrogantly saying "it pleases me." Meanwhile the boy's mind should be kept inactive as long as possible, while his body and senses should be de-

veloped. In order to hinder the rise of evil, we must not be too hasty in instilling good, for that requires the mind to be enlightened by reason. "Look upon every delay as an advantage; let childhood ripen in children. Do not therefore alarm yourself at this seeming idleness. What would you say of a man who, in order to make the most of life, resolved never to go to sleep? You would say the man is mad: in order to escape sleep, he hastens towards death. It is the same here: childhood is the sleep of reason."

The only passion natural to man is self-love—a passion good in itself, which only becomes bad by misapplication. Our first duties are towards ourselves; our first feelings centre on our own persons. Accordingly, the first notion of justice is not what we owe to others, but what others owe to us; and the serious and common error is that of teaching children their duties before they learn their rights. Such a right is that of property; and as it is best to teach by examples, Rousseau shows how he would give a boy a conception of the right of property—the last, judging from his early works, which we should have expected him to inculcate. Emile digs a plot of ground, where he sows some beans; he waters them, he watches them growing with intense delight. He is taught that they belong to him by devoting his time and his trouble to them; so that in the ground there is part of himself, which he has a right to insist on as his own. One fine morning, however, he goes to water his beans, and finds that they have been uprooted by the gardener, who is thereupon summoned, and accused of having done this injury. The gardener then accuses Emile in turn of spoiling his ground, and of having destroyed the melons

which he had sown in order to make way for the beans. "Do you often lose your melons?" asks Emile, and the man replies that he is not accustomed to visits of heedless young gentlemen like him,—that everybody respects another's labours, and nobody meddles with other people's gardens. The gardener, however, grants him a little corner of the garden;—"but, mind you," he adds, "I'll pluck up your beans if you meddle with my melons." In this way property is traced to its first occupier, and the child learns by experience. It is difficult to see why this lesson could not have been given as effectively by the explanation of the gardener, with great saving of time, trouble, beans, and melons. Rousseau, however, insists upon the superiority of example over precept. That the course is painfully elaborate—that the little scenes carefully prepared may totally fail, the little ruses be easily detected, and the lad rendered permanently distrustful,—are arguments which have no weight with the author.

If a heedless boy breaks anything he comes near, we are not to be vexed, but put everything breakable beyond his reach: if he breaks the furniture, let him feel the want of it; if he breaks the window, let the wind blow through the broken panes day and night; and if he catches cold, it is better to have a cold than to remain a fool. Punishment should never be inflicted as punishment, for he has no notion of moral right and wrong; but the boy should suffer the natural consequences of his folly and passion. If he tells lies, do not chastise him, but let him feel the inconveniences of so doing, by not believing him even when he tells the truth, and by his being thought guilty even when he is

innocent. So with regard to virtue, the child should not be taught by lessons what is right, but let him see good actions done by others; for although at his age imitative virtue is little but aping, yet children should be accustomed to acts of which we wish them to acquire the habit, till they are capable of doing them from principle. Rousseau will not have children taught to read until twelve years old, for "reading is the scourge of children," and the abuse of reading is the destruction of knowledge; he should rather be able to draw, and swim, and run, and jump. "Yet I am almost certain that Emile will know perfectly well how to read and write before ten, because I give myself very little care whether he learn it or not before he is fifteen." "Since he must read something, the first book shall be 'Robinson Crusoe,' which affords a complete treasury of natural education," and where he learns the means of self-preservation and the dignity of labour. His attention should be directed to natural phenomena, and his curiosity will be soon awakened; but in order that this curiosity may be kept alive, we should not be too urgent to satisfy it. Put questions adapted to his capacity, and leave him to solve them, and let him learn nothing by rote or by mere words; for we acquire clearer notions of things we learn for ourselves than of those we are taught by others. Geography should be taught neither by maps nor globes, but by seeing objects themselves. Take him, for example, to see the rising sun, and then the setting sun, and let him reflect upon the different positions; let him make his own maps by observing the country; let him make his own instruments and his tools, and he will become ingenious. "Instead of

gluing a boy to his books, employ him in a workshop: his hands will work to the benefit of his mind, and he will become a philosopher when he believes himself only a workman." "What is the use of that?" must be the sacred phrase between pupil and tutor, and facts will become impressed on his memory as he discovers that it is his interest to know them. Astronomy is taught to Emile in this way. He and his tutor were observing the position of the forest north of Montmorency, when he puts the "sacred phrase," "What is the use of doing this?" The answer is given next day by the conscientious tutor going out with Emile, and purposely losing his way in the forest till the boy is frightened, and both are tired and hungry by a whole day's pretended futile efforts to find the road. At last, by the suggestion of the tutor, the boy is made to find out for himself, by the direction of the shadow of the sun, where they are, and where their home lay—the other side of the hedge all the while. In this way the boy learns "that astronomy is good for something, and never will forget the lesson"—unfortunately neither will the worn-out tutor, who is always trying these little stratagems, which, strange to say, the boy never sees through.

At twelve years old Emile is a vigorous, healthy animal, with every muscle splendidly developed, knows no distinction between work and play, "does not know what a command is, but will readily do anything for another person, in order to place that person under an obligation, and so increase his rights;" he is influenced by no authority, acts as pleases himself, knows no distinction of rank, and knows nothing of custom or fashion. In all the minute details of his experiments, which we

have hardly space even to indicate, the author is not altogether unconscious of being tiresome, for he exclaims: "Reader, I hear your murmurings, and disregard them; I will not sacrifice the most useful part of my book to your impatience." But it is an impatience which we at least must respect on the part of our readers.

In his effort to educate naturally, Rousseau makes the mistake of training the senses solely, and thus stunting the moral and mental faculties, which the ordinary circumstances of life would evolve if Rousseau did not himself arrange the circumstances. For instance, if Emile sees a man in a rage, he is not told of its sinfulness, is not warned against it; he is kept totally ignorant of any such vice: he sees only the signs which strike his senses; he sees the sparkling eyes, the menacing gesture, the inflamed face, which show the body is not in its proper state. When he asks what it all means, "Tell him the man is ill; he has an attack of fever." There is, of course, a constant series of precautions needed to prevent his being undeceived. The inevitable result of the scheme is that the mind does not grow naturally after all; the body develops, and the moral nature is abnormally retarded by this tutor, who plays the part of a lay providence.

Emile at length begins to learn his relations to society, the first law of which is self-preservation. According to Rousseau, the satirist who said, "I must live," in excuse for pursuing his trade, was right.

"'I do not see the necessity for that,' was an excellent reply for a Minister, but barbarous and false on the lips of any one else. Since of all aversions which nature gives, the strongest is that of dying, it follows that everything is permissible to him who has no other means of living. . . . If

there be such a wretched government on the earth under which it is impossible for a man to live justly, and where the citizens are compelled to be knaves, it is not the criminals who ought to be hanged, but he who drives them to such crimes."

It is such a lesson which the French peasantry were soon to learn in the Revolution, when St Just's dictum became the national cry, *Le pain est le droit du peuple.*

So soon as Emile knows what life is, he must be taught how to preserve it; and what is better than for him to learn a trade, which will render him independent of all changes of fortune, and superior to the common prejudices by which labour is brought into contempt?

"My son learn a trade! make my son a mechanic! Think, monsieur, what you advise. I do, madame. I consider this matter better than you, who would reduce your child to the necessity of being a lord, a marquis, or a prince, or perhaps some day to be less than nothing. I wish to invest him with a title which cannot be taken from him, which will at all times command respect; and I can tell you, whatever you may think, he will have fewer equals in this rank than in that which he may derive from you."

What trade is best is the only point worth discussion. Agricultural labour is good, but that Emile already understands, having learnt to cultivate his paternal inheritance. But as he may lose that, a handicraft is essential to him.

Rousseau points his lessons by one of those passages in which invective on society adds a bitterness to his warning counsel,—one of those passages which, read in the light of after-events, seem full of strange, unconscious prophecy.

"We are drawing near a state of crisis and an age of revolutions. Who can tell what will then become of you? All that men have made, men can destroy. There are no characters ineffaceable except those which nature has imprinted, and nature has made neither princes, nor rich, nor great. What, then, in his abasement, will the satrap do whom you have brought up only to greatness? What will the farmer of taxes do in poverty who lived only for gold? What will the weak pampered being do, when deprived of everything, who can do nothing for himself, and puts his whole being in that which is apart from himself? Happy, then, the man who knows how to quit the rank which quits him, and who remains a man in spite of fate. Others may praise as much as they please that vanquished king who wished to bury himself under the ruins of his throne; for my part I despise him. I see that he existed only by his crown, and that he is nothing if not a king; but he who loses that and can dispense with it, is then superior to it. From the rank of a king, which a coward, a knave, or a fool can fill as well as any other, he rises to the state of a man, which so few men know how to fill. . . . Yes: I prefer a hundred times the king of Syracuse master of a school in Corinth, and the king of Macedonia a notary in Rome, to the wretched Tarquin, not knowing what to do if he does not reign, or to the heir of a sovereign of three kingdoms, become the sport of every one who dared to insult his misery, wandering from Court to Court, seeking everywhere for aid and finding everywhere affronts,—all from being ignorant how to follow any other occupation than that which is no longer in his power."

Rousseau here points his moral by the fate of Prince Charles Edward, wandering from Court to Court; and at that time there were many others to enforce the author's lesson, as those may remember who have read the memorable passage in Voltaire's 'Candide,' which describes the six kings out of place, who met and bewailed their common fate at a *café* in Venice. Not that the learning

of a trade would have benefited them much, any more than it did Louis XVI., who spent less time in mending his state than in mending locks. Emile, therefore, must learn a trade, and that a manual one, which will not make a fortune, but enable him to do without one. If a man learn a fine art, he must intrigue, flatter, and cringe to make his way, pay court to Ministers and to ladies, bribe porters, "who understand only by gratuities, and whose ears are in their hands," and only succeed at last in adding slavery to poverty. It is better to be a shoemaker than a poet, better to pave streets than to paint flowers on china, while to be a tailor is only fit for women; and were he a king, Rousseau would not allow sewing or needle-work to any save cripples and women. He decides that the trade of a carpenter is best; and the tutor and Emile together became apprentices, not for play but in earnest. In accordance with the position of a tradesman Emile had all along been trained: in his room there was nothing to distinguish it from a peasant's except cleanliness; his fare is simple; he knows nothing of rank, and he is taught that the people are indispensable, while the rich and great are superfluous.

"A father cannot transmit to his son the right of being useless to his fellow-creatures, and yet, according to your notions, he actually does this by transmitting his wealth, the proof and reward of his labour. The man who earns not his subsistence, but eats the bread of idleness, is no better than a thief; and a pensioner, who is paid by the state for doing nothing, differs little, according to my idea of things, from a robber, who is supported by the plunder which he makes on the highway. Man in a state of solitude, not being indebted to the assistance or good offices of others, has a right to live as he pleases. But in a state of society where he must be

necessarily maintained at the expense of the community, he certainly owes the state so much labour as will pay for his subsistence, and this without exception to rank and persons. To labour, then, is the indispensable duty of social and political man. Rich or poor, strong or weak, every idle citizen is a knave."

Arrived at the age of fifteen, Emile has a sound constitution, an active body, "a clear understanding, a heart free and without passions." Now, however, he advances. "The source of human passions, the origin and principle of all others,—the only one which is born in man, and which never leaves him,—is self-love." This is an innate passion of which all the others are modifications. This self-regarding love is always good and necessary for our preservation. We love ourselves first, then that which benefits us, before we love others for themselves. We feel for suffering in others, because it awakens a sense of pain in ourselves. It is in this way that Emile gains the sentiment of sympathy, that he is to be strengthened in his hatred of cruelty and oppression, and incited to humanity. Until this stage Emile feels for himself alone as an individual, and not as a member of society. Rousseau now recommends first biography, and then history, as Emile's best means of studying man's heart, previous to observing it in action in the world, and as a means of learning his duty in society.

During all this time the pupil is supposed to know nothing of religion and the existence of a God. "At fifteen he does not know that he has a soul, and perhaps, at eighteen, it is too soon to tell him, for it is a mistake to teach ideas too great to be understood." Yet it is diffi-

cult to comprehend how, notwithstanding all his instructor's precautions, he has passed so many years without ever hearing of it from others, or ever reading of it for himself. Indeed, after reading 'Robinson Crusoe,' which his tutor gave him as his first book, and which speaks so much of Providence, he could not possibly, the author forgets, have remained ignorant of religion. Rousseau's notion is that "it is better to have no idea of God at all, than to have mean and unworthy ideas of Him." This opinion is only what Bacon had long before repeated after Plutarch: "It is better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely." The simple notions of Deity entertained by a child Jean Jacques strangely considers as injurious as the unworthy notions entertained of Him by a man. "Every child that believes in God is either an idolater or an anthropomorphist;" but instead of thinking that childish notions will in time give way to higher conceptions, he holds that "these false representations given to children are never effaced." Emile, therefore, is not taught any special form of religion, but enabled to choose for himself according as his reason may direct him. In the remarkable episode of the Savoyard Vicar, which is here introduced, Rousseau lays down proofs of a Deity to him so undeniable that he concludes that "whoever denies there is a God is either a liar or a madman." So soon, then, as Emile has arrived at the knowledge of a God, new ways are found of influencing his heart. He finds that it is his interest to be virtuous, both from love to God and from the love of himself, which makes him seek the true means of attaining eternal happiness.

At the age of twenty, Emile remains still under the charge of his instructor, because that is the time when social temptations and passions are strongest,—when from thoughts of love he must be diverted by other occupations. He is now introduced amidst the seductions of Parisian society, for he is supposed to be preserved from all its snares by the simple device of his tutor describing to his pupil the ideal of a wife,—not too perfect to be impossible, but real enough to be fascinating. "I would go so far as to name her. I should tell him simply, 'Let us call your future wife Sophie; that is a name of good omen.'" All that is needful are a few artful descriptions, which make the object like truth. This imaginary Sophie is represented to the youth as shy, chaste, simple, and good; and this ideal acts like a talisman,—inspires him with love for all that resembles it, with dislike for all that is opposite to it. "You may introduce him now into life without danger. Only guard his senses; his heart is safe." Surely never was more artless advice given than by this mildly artful preceptor, when he gave his infallible recipe for preserving immaculate propriety in the gay society of Paris. "I would fain know," he asks confidently, "if ever there was a youth better armed than mine against everything capable of perverting his morals?" "I have laboured hard for twenty years to arm him against scoffers, and he regards ridicule as the reason of fools." Emile despises the affectation and insincerity of society; he does not join in its shallow, clever talk. "God forbid that he should be so unhappy as to wish to shine!" He is taken to the Academy, only "to be amused by the babbling;" and passes

through city life untainted by its vice, unpolished by its manners, uncorrupted by its philosophers.

But a worthy mate must be found for Emile. The real Sophie must be discovered; and that can only be in the uncontaminated country. "Then farewell, Paris! that famous town, seat of noise, of smoke, and dirt, where the women no longer believe in any honour, nor the men in any virtue. Farewell, Paris! we are in search of love, happiness, and innocence, and cannot be far enough from thee." So the two pilgrims trudge away on foot,—the perfect mode of travelling, in the opinion of Jean Jacques. Preparatory, however, to our introduction to Sophie, we are treated to a long discourse on the education of women, which deals with every domestic occupation from toys to religion, and treats of every restraint, from whalebone and tight lacing to morality. The discourse is remarkable for the method of education for girls which it recommends,—for, in Rousseau's opinion, the whole aim should be to suit woman to the convenience of man, to make her pleasant, useful, and helpful to him. She is to rule only by gentleness and complaisance: "her commands are caresses; her menaces are tears." In her case, faith should be regulated by the authority of others, not by intelligence; for "women cannot keep within the bounds of the evidence of reason, being led by impulse,—always in extremes, either libertines or devotees." A girl's religion should therefore be that of her mother until her marriage, when she should adopt that of her husband. And though it has been pronounced degrading to the Deity and injurious to the man for a boy to have a premature idea of God, girls ought, on the contrary, to

be taught early about God, although—or rather because—they cannot comprehend Him. They are to be kept under restraint, to be constantly controlled, and to be always under conventional rules. In fact, the education of girls ought to be exactly the reverse of that of boys: for while the latter should be carefully trained according to nature, the other should be trained without any regard to it at all. There was a cynical audacity in thus presenting to French society, as the model of a wife and daughter, a woman fitted not to be the companion of a man of intelligence, but merely the keeper of his house and the nurse of his children,—a woman without grace, without knowledge, and without wit. All this, too, in an age when women were potent influences in every social and political movement, and the centres of intellectual circles. It was characteristic, however, of Rousseau, that he should by his picture of an ideal wife condemn those ladies, full of intelligence and social grace, whose wit annoyed him while their kindness befriended him. The faithful admirer of Thérèse was, however, scarcely the most delicate judge of what are the finest qualities in woman.

It is in conformity with his plan of feminine education that Sophie is brought up. In the course of their travels from Paris, Emile and his guardian take shelter in a gentleman's house, and there they find the ideal Sophie in real life. We are told of her character: how she is bashful, useful, polite, yet simple. We learn her faults: how she is fond of dress, at first greedy, and always fond of sweetmeats; and how she learned music chiefly to display her hands on the harpsichord. We are then told of the courtship,—her coyness, Emile's

eagerness, the tutor's restraints, and, after an engagement of two years, their marriage. All this is narrated with remorseless minuteness; and the occasional idyllic charm of the scenes is interrupted ever and anon by tedious and grossly frank lectures, in which the tutor guides the affections, the passions, and even the matrimonial conduct of his too docile pupil.

His work finished, Rousseau feels that he has accomplished the feat of making man as he is meant to be. It would have been well if he had stopped here, instead of beginning in a sequel ('Emile et Sophie') to present Sophie as unfaithful. The object of his design in doing this was, he told Hume, to show the success of his plan by placing his late pupil in trying circumstances, from which he extricates himself admirably, bearing his "injury with manly superior merit, and treating Sophie as equally amiable, equally estimable, as if she had no such frailty." It was certainly wise of Bernardin de St Pierre to decline Rousseau's request that he should finish the unfortunate fragment (the closing pages of which leave Emile a slave in Algiers), and allow the story, with its grotesque plot, to remain untold.

"I preach," says Rousseau, "a difficult art,—the art of guiding without precepts, and of doing everything by doing nothing." But his plan is more than negative. In reality, he influences Emile night and day through more than twenty years, and holds him in leading-strings even after his marriage. He adopts precautions, restraints, stratagems without ceasing, to carry out his plans and prevent their being spoiled,—a strangely unnatural way of rearing according to nature. Rousseau makes his

pupil as he would a puppet,—makes him think, act, speak, exactly as he pleases; makes events happen exactly as suits him, and affect him exactly as he wishes. In order to succeed with his method, we must therefore at least have a guardian like Jean Jacques and a pupil like Emile. And after all, it is an expensive mode of education, seeing that, in order to make each perfect citizen, it is necessary to sacrifice the career of another man who must devote twenty-five years to train him. And, in spite of all this devotion, if the disturbing elements of a father's authority and a mother's affection, or indeed any accidental influence, come in to spoil the tutor's scheme, it falls like a castle of cards. This the author felt himself; and to more than one enthusiastic correspondent, who wished to make his work a model of education, he wrote with that calm sense with which in his letters he so often qualified the extreme views of his published works. He insisted that his system—in principle, though not in all details—must be carried out in its entirety, or not at all; and he dreaded those foolish admirers, who would only spoil the man by imperfectly carrying out the plan. He honoured the heroic courage of an *abbé* who adopted his scheme, but warned him of the immense labour and difficulty of his task, which must last for twenty years: "One moment of impatience, negligence, or forgetfulness may deprive you of the fruit of six years of toil, without the possibility of recovering it by the work of ten years more." "You see," said a M. Angar to him (in 1765, at Strasburg), "a man who has brought up his son according to the principles which he has had the good fortune to find in your

'Emile.'" "So much the worse, monsieur,—so much the worse for you and your son," grumbled Rousseau to his disconcerted disciple.

In examining the teaching in 'Emile,' it is easy for us to see that, while many of his plans were impracticable, many of his most striking principles were not new. Montaigne, Locke, even 'Robinson Crusoe' (for which he had a profound admiration), were productive of thoughts which germinated in his fertile mind, and which were rendered influential by his powerful style. Perhaps none anticipated him more in his views on practical education than Rabelais in his training of Gargantua by Pantocrates. There we find condemnation of vestments which imprison the body and stunt the limbs; there we find recommendation of the alternation of physical and intellectual exercises; there we find a king sawing wood and ricking hay; there we find the pupil making his own tools, learning things before words, and gaining a knowledge of science by first observing objects in nature. But genius is shown less in suggesting plans than in making others adopt them. And therein lies the originality of Rousseau. When others taught no one followed, but when he spoke society obeyed him. Even the advice of learning a trade was adopted by men of rank, not only in France, but also in Germany. Turning became the favourite handicraft, and in many a *schloss* there is still the deserted room where youths of a long-past generation learnt to turn the lathe.

Rousseau's immediate influence was immense in French society, for this democratic writer had most power with the aristocratic ranks, and especially after the suppression of the Jesuits, when the circulation of

'Emile' was doubled. He instilled, to some extent, a tone of purity and simplicity into society, where he sought to reconstitute domestic life; he added a dignity to the work of teaching, and gave a new importance to the duties of the nursery and schoolroom; he brushed away innumerable pedantic habits which wearied the frame and cramped the mind. By insisting on maternal duties, he won the hearts of women, and his book became "the breviary of young mothers." "We must pardon something," said Madame Marmontel to her husband, when, one day, he was descanting on the enormities of Jean Jacques—"we must pardon something to him who has taught us all to be mothers." By his powerful advocacy of simplicity in childhood, many began to realise the folly of making children the mere apes of adults; and many were induced to make less ridiculous those boys—curled, powdered, trained to wear swords by their sides, and hats gracefully under their arms—and those girls, with huge head-dresses and furbelows and rouge, simpering compliments and studying deportment, with all the artifices of age and none of the freshness of youth. "The teacher," says Jean Paul Richter, "has to liberate the ideal man in every child." And this is not the only point in which Jean Paul is at one with Jean Jacques. Finding in society beings with their humanity stunted by following all their days artificial rules, customs, and prejudices, which made "perfect gentlemen" but most imperfect men, Rousseau tried to show that every moral, intellectual, and physical faculty should be developed in due order. Even over Italy a wave of sentiment passed, and the influence of Rousseau was felt there. Beyond the Alps, simple

virtues and domestic life were lauded in fervid strains. Ladies ceased to send their babies out to nurse, and, as in France, discarded whalebone and tight lacing; writers painted the horrors of rouge, late hours, and fashionable dresses; and enthusiasm for nature became *à la mode.*

The immediate effect of 'Emile' in England was comparatively slight. Although it was twice or thrice translated into English, gained recognition from philosophical writers, and was ultimately to modify the systems of education, perhaps Henry Brooke's 'Fool of Quality' and Day's 'Sandford and Merton,' with the patient and pedantic tutor Mr Barlow, are the only books which show distinct imitations of its educational method, while the direct influence of its social teaching is chiefly found in Godwin's 'Political Justice.' Yet there is not a school in our country with its freedom from pedantry, its physical training, and modern mode of education, which has not indirectly been affected by 'Emile.' In Germany, on the other hand, it was hailed with admiration, and one philosopher after another welcomed what Goethe called the "natural gospel of education." Herder had no words strong enough to express his enthusiasm for "the divine Emile." Richter, in his 'Levana,' declares that he owes more to it than to any other work. It was even noted as a remarkable fact that Kant interrupted the clock-work routine of his days at Königsberg, and stayed at home to read this new revelation, the doctrine of which permanently affected his opinions and his teaching.

'Emile' incited Basedow, that eccentric and far from sober German professor, to try to revolutionise education,

at a time when physical training was ignored, when the mother-tongue was neglected, and Greek and Latin in dull mechanical way were alone taught, by dreariest rules, and with most merciless flogging—when the school-rooms were dark and dismal, and when children of the upper classes were dressed like *petits-maîtres*, curled, powdered, with braided coats, knee-breeches, and daggers by their sides.[1] No wonder Kant said that education needed not a reform, but a revolution. All this Basedow tried to change, and in his Philanthropin in Dessau he adopted many of Rousseau's methods, and acted on the rule, "Everything according to nature." In his school, his pupils had short hair, simple dresses, open throats, and shirt-collars falling over their coats; they learned object-lessons, got physical training, and each learned a handicraft. When Basedow resigned his post—for, as Herder said, he was not fit to have calves intrusted to him—Campe, author of the 'New Robinson Crusoe,' succeeded him, and like him worshipped Rousseau, on whose bust he inscribed the words, "my saint." Kant prophesied that now men were educated according to nature, and that another race of men would spring up. But the school, like its eccentric founder (who left his body to be dissected for the benefit of mankind), passed away, though not without leaving lasting results. In Switzerland and Germany, schools were founded on similar principles, and the doctrines of 'Emile' were adopted even by its enemies. Pestalozzi, who was anxious to do for the poor of Switzerland what Rousseau had tried to do for the rich of France, carried

[1] Raumur's Geschichte der Pedagogik, ii. 29, quoted in Quick's Educational Reformers, p. 141.

into operation many of its suggestions, inculcating home education by affection, gradual development of teaching according to age and growth of faculties, the method of object-lessons and physical training. Through the teaching of men like Pestalozzi and Fröbel the influence of Rousseau spread widely and insensibly through every educational system of Europe.

CHAPTER X.

CONFESSION OF THE SAVOYARD VICAR ('EMILE').

THE episode of the Savoyard Vicar in 'Emile' is too remarkable in itself, and too important in its results, not to require separate notice. It is a manifesto at once against the orthodox dogmas of the Church and against the prevailing philosophical unbelief of the day, which Rousseau regarded with equal dislike. Scepticism he met with everywhere,—in society, in literature, and among the clergy,—from ladies in their drawing-rooms and wits in the *café*, to the Encyclopedists who were sapping and mining established opinions, and preparing for a revolution of society by a revolution of thought. At the supper-parties of Madame Geoffrin, or the dinner-table of D'Holbach, the Mæcenas of philosophers—every question was discussed, from a new dish to a new philosophy. D'Holbach would stolidly denounce the tyranny of kings and priests, and join with Helvetius in showing that materialism is true philosophy. Diderot, with his vehement voice, would declaim against such needless restrictions as marriage; while D'Alembert, with more balanced words, would show the difficulties of theists; and St Lambert would ridicule theism altogether. Abbé

Galiani, the brilliant dwarf, with his wig on his knee as he sat cross-legged on a chair, would occasionally for a minute be serious, and pose the confident philosophers with the ease of a man with three dice throwing sixes constantly. "Of course," said he, as he gave his apologue, "Diderot, on losing some francs, would say, 'The dice are loaded; we are in a bad house!' and yet in the universe, where there are an enormous number of combinations, difficult and complicated, you don't suspect that the dice of nature are loaded, and that there is a great rogue at work who takes pleasure in trapping you." Rousseau would sit silent and angry, never ready with a retort or a reply, while the company set aside each theological doctrine as worthless, as composedly as they would a bottle of wine that is corked. Even Voltaire, always consistently a theist, was at times alarmed at the too free expression of loose opinion, which he feared as dangerous to the lower orders, who needed religion as a moral police. One day, when the existence of a God was being debated with much freedom, to the astonishment of the company he ordered the servants to leave the room, and locked the door. "Gentlemen," he explained, as he returned to his seat, "I do not wish my valet to cut my throat to-morrow morning." The shallow scepticism of society, which echoed the views of philosophers without seeing the immense issues involved in them, and took pleasure in condensing a philosophy into a phrase, or annihilating a creed by an epigram, irritated Rousseau. One evening, for instance, he was at a supper-party at the house of Madlle. Quinault, the retired actress. There everything was talked of—tapestry, physic, religion. St Lambert,

who was always proclaiming his atheism, ridiculed the idea of a God "who makes himself angry and appeases himself." Rousseau became vexed, and muttered impatiently between his teeth, on which they began to rally him, until he exclaimed, "If it is base to suffer that one should speak evil of an absent friend, it is a crime that one should suffer evil to be spoken of his God who is present; and for my part, gentlemen, I believe in God." After Jean Jacques' interruption, the conversation still flowed on in the same strain, and St Lambert rejoined to Madame d'Epinay's sentimental remark, that the existence of an eternal Being is the germ of the finest enthusiasm, by retorting that it is the germ of every folly. On this Rousseau cried out, "Gentlemen, I go away if you say another word." This scene displeased him much; and on speaking of it afterwards to Madame d'Epinay, he said, "I do not like public discussions like these. I would like to see the bottom of the heart of the most determined of the godless, when they are dying. I am certain I should see disquietude and fear, which pierce very often through the easy appearance they assume. *Ma foi!* it is a bad service to render to a man tormented with disease all his days, to tell him there is no compensation awaiting him for the constant evil which he did not deserve." [1]

In his 'New Héloïse' he had presented the picture of a woman who could reason like a philosopher and yet believe in a God, which did much to win ladies at least to religious enthusiasm. Now he tried to wage war against the philosophers, and to commend religion not only to the heart but to the intellect. It is in the

[1] Madame d'Epinay, Mémoires, ii. 75.

person of a simple priest that Rousseau, in 'Emile,' with his usual dramatic inappropriateness, but also with his wonted force, lucidity, and sombre power, expresses what may be regarded as his own religious convictions. He narrates how he came in contact with the obscure priest in Savoy, and in the course of their intercourse gained his confidence, and heard his profession of faith.

"It was in summer: we rose at break of day. He led me outside the town to a high hill, below which the Po wound its way; in the distance the immense chain of the Alps crowned the landscape; the rays of the rising sun struck athwart the plains, and projected on the fields the long shadows of the trees, the slopes, the houses, enriching by a thousand accidents of light the loveliest prospect which the human eye could behold."

It is in such a scene that the priest tells the story of his life and the origin of his faith. He narrates how he had been plunged into scepticism, and, hating the misery of it, sought for grounds on which he could rebuild his faith. He read philosophers, but found them all conceited, all dogmatic even in their doubt, and agreeing in nothing but in laughing at each other. He turned at last to himself, in order to find there the instrument by which he could attain the truth. Proceeding, step by step, from the existence of the world and motion to belief in a First Cause, and from marks of design in nature having proved the existence of an Intelligent Will, he ascends to the idea and proof of an infinite God.

"I perceive God in all His works; I feel Him in myself; I see Him all around me; but as soon as I contemplate His nature, as soon as I try to find out where He is, what He is,

what is His substance, He eludes my gaze; my imagination is overwhelmed. I do not therefore reason about Him, for it is more injurious to the Deity to think wrongly of Him, than not to think of Him at all."

The existence of moral evil is simply explained by the existence in man of free-will, a gift which ennobles humanity, made in the divine image, and which man, and not God, is to be blamed for misusing. The existence of physical evil perplexes his mind as little; though, if he had no other proof of the immortality of the soul than the triumph of the wicked and the oppression of the good, that alone would prevent him from doubting it.

"Do not ask me if the torments of the wicked will be eternal: I do not know, and I have no idle curiosity to clear up useless questions. What matters it to me what becomes of the wicked? I take very little interest in their fate. Nevertheless I hardly believe they will be condemned to endless torments. If the Supreme Being avenges Himself in this life, you and your errors, O nations! are His ministers. He employs the evil you have done to yourselves to punish the crimes which have caused them. It is in your insatiable hearts, gnawed by avarice, envy, and ambition in the midst of your false prosperity, that the avenging passions punish your crimes. O Thou most merciful and benign Being, whatever be Thy decrees, I adore them. If Thou punishest eternally the wicked, I annihilate my reason before Thy justice; but if the remorse of those unfortunate beings ends with time, if their evils are to cease, and the same peace one day awaits us all equally, I praise Thy goodness."

In the opinion of the priest true worship is simply adoration, for he cannot ask God to change the wise order of nature,—a request which, he thinks, deserves rather to be punished than answered. His sole prayer

is, therefore, "Thy will be done." This view of prayer is more than once expressed by Rousseau, although he, like the Savoyard Vicar, in public worship followed the accustomed form of prayers. "I do not find," he says in his Confessions, "any more worthy homage to the Deity than that mute admiration which is awakened by the contemplation of His works, and which does not express itself by outward acts. In my room I pray more rarely and more coldly; but at the sight of a beautiful landscape I feel myself moved without knowing why. I have read that a wise bishop, in visiting his diocese, found an old woman who said nothing but 'Oh!' He said to her, 'Good mother, continue always to pray thus; your prayer is better than ours.' That better prayer is mine too." In giving his theistic arguments, few of which are original, and many of which are weak, everything is put with wonderful lucidity, and at times with eloquent strains of passionate conviction. The weakness of Rousseau was his impatience with every intellectual argument, to which his heart gave the denial. A man who does not believe in God is, according to him, a madman; to deny free-will is pronounced an "idle sophism;" the theories of philosophers are brushed aside with anger as wretched quibbling, which may please conceited thinkers, but cannot satisfy any who wish to know the truth. He bears down the objections of science and metaphysics with a rush of eloquence and a flood of sentiment in which reason gasps for breath. Feeling is with him the criterion of truth, and it is not wonderful that men of more philosophical intellect should refuse to be confuted by his mere logic of the emotions.

When, in the person of the priest, Rousseau proceeded

to discuss revealed religion, he gave negative arguments, which solaced the philosophers of society somewhat for his uncompromising defence of theism. He holds that if a man only give heed to what God says in his heart, he will need no other revelation; he argues, consequently, that either all religions are good and acceptable to God, or if He has prescribed one to mankind, and punishes them for not knowing it, He must have given unmistakable signs to distinguish that faith as true,—signs which are at all times, and in all places, clear to every man. If there is any religion out of which there is no salvation, and there happens to be a single mortal who feels unconvinced of its truth, the god of that religion would be the most unjust and the cruellest of tyrants.

"Apostle of truth, what have you to tell me of which I am not a judge? 'God Himself has spoken; listen to His revelation.' That is another thing; to whom has He spoken? 'To man.' How comes it, then, that I did not hear Him? 'He commissioned other men to tell you what He has said.' I had much rather have heard God Himself; it would not have cost Him more, and would have saved me from all imposition. 'He secures you against that by attesting the mission of His envoys.' How so? 'By prodigies.' And where are those prodigies? 'In books.' And who composed those books? 'Men.' And who saw the prodigies? 'The men by whom they are attested.' What! always human testimony,—always men who report to me what other men have reported? What a number of men between God and myself! Let us see, however; let us verify. Oh, if God had only deigned to excuse me all this trouble, would I have served Him with less zeal? . . . If there be but one religion, and every man is obliged to follow it on pain of damnation, we ought to spend our whole lives in studying, examining, and comparing them all; and we should even

travel to different countries, where they are established. Nobody is exempted from the principal duty of man; nobody has any right to depend on the judgment of another. The artisan who lives by his work, the labourer who cannot even read, the timid and delicate girl, the infirm man who can scarcely raise himself from his bed,—all these, without exception, would be obliged to study, meditate, discuss, and travel all over the world. There would no longer be any people settled; the whole earth would be covered with pilgrims going at great expense and severe fatigue to verify, compare, and examine for themselves the different religions which are professed. Farewell, then, the trades, the arts, the human sciences, and all civil occupations; there would no longer be any other study than that of religion; with great difficulty he who has enjoyed the strongest health, best employed his time, best used his reason, and lived longest, will know in his old age which to accept; and it will be much if he learn before he dies in what faith he ought to have lived. . . . I never have believed that God has commanded men under pain of damnation to be so learned."

He closes, then, all books except one, and that is the book of nature, which is open to all, legible to all, whatever their condition, whatever their tongue may be,—a book which reveals the mind and will of God. With regard to the existence of revelation, the priest can come to no decisive conclusion, there seem so many solid reasons both for and against it; but he objects to the alleged obligation of accepting it, because he considers that obligation increases instead of removing the obstacles to salvation. "I acknowledge," he says, in an oft-quoted passage—

"I acknowledge to you that the holiness of the Gospel is an argument which appeals to my heart, and to which I should be sorry even to find an answer. Look at the works

of philosophers with all their pomp, how petty they are beside that! Can a book at once so sublime and so simple be the work of man? Can He whose history it gives be only a man Himself? Is this the tone of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in His morals! what a touching grace in His teaching! what elevation in His maxims! what profound wisdom in His discourses! what presence of mind, what tact, what justice in His answers! what command over His passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who can thus act, suffer, and die without weakness and without ostentation? . . . Where did Jesus learn amongst His people that morality, so lofty and so pure, of which He alone has given the lessons and the example? From the midst of the most furious fanaticism the highest wisdom made itself heard, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues shed lustre on the basest of all races. The death of Socrates, philosophising tranquilly with his friends, is the gentlest that one could desire; that of Jesus, dying in torture, abused, mocked, cursed by all, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates takes his poisoned cup and blesses him who in tears presents it; Jesus, in the midst of frightful suffering, prays for His infuriated executioners. Yes! if the life and death of Socrates be that of a sage, the life and death of Jesus is that of a God."

But notwithstanding all this, the priest finds himself forced to own that the Gospel abounds in things so incredible, so irrational, that no man of sense could conceive or adopt them. What, then, is to be done? "Be modest and circumspect, respect in silence that which can neither be rejected nor comprehended, and humble yourself before the great Being to whom alone the truth is known." Meanwhile he regards all particular religions as salutary institutions which prescribe in each country a uniform manner of worship, all of which

have their special reasons in the climate, the government, the genius of the people, or in some other local cause which renders one preferable to the others, according to special times and places. For his part, he says, since the adoption of his new principles—

"I perform the acts of religion with greater devotion. I am overwhelmed by the majesty of the Supreme Being, by His presence, by the insufficiency of the human mind. I take care to omit neither the least word nor the least ceremony. I collect myself to perform the act of consecration with all the feelings which the Church and the greatness of the sacrament demand. I try to annihilate my reason before the Supreme Intelligence. I say, 'Who art thou that thou shouldst measure divine power?' Whatever the inconceivable mystery may be, I do not fear that, at the day of judgment, I shall be punished for having profaned it in my heart. . . . Until we know more fully what the truth is, let us regard the public order; in every country let us respect the laws and refrain from disturbing the worship they prescribe; do not incite citizens to disobedience,—for while we are not certain that it is good for them to change their opinions, we are certain that it is bad for them to disobey the laws. . . . Enough for man," he concludes, "to do his duty on earth, to be sincere, to speak what is true, and do what is good."

This is not a very satisfactory end to the glowing confession of the priest, and perhaps some may even prefer his honest scepticism before his conversion to his devout insincerity after it. An outward conformity gained by untruthfulness, an obedience to law rendered by hypocrisy, transfigured by sentiment, is scarcely worthy of admiration. It is significant, however, of the clergy of France, who tried to punish the heretical teaching of Rousseau, that none of the host of critics in cassocks

condemned the insincere conformity of the Vicar, which, indeed, so many practised themselves. It is also characteristic that Rousseau himself did not see the slightest inconsistency in representing the devout priest in one sentence as joining enthusiastically in solemn sacramental acts in which he did not believe, while in another he makes him announce that simple truth and rectitude form the best religion for man. To discover that Jean Jacques' views were, on this point at least, consistent with his own practice, we may turn to the Register of the Consistory of Geneva on the occasion of his admission to citizenship: "1st Aug. 1754—Sieur Jean Jacques Rousseau, having given satisfaction with regard to all points of doctrine, was admitted to the Holy Communion."

What the legal and personal results to the author of the publication of 'Emile' were, we shall soon see: the literary and social effects of the Confession were very striking. The clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, while recognising in Rousseau a powerful advocate of theism, feared in him a dangerous foe to revelation and to orthodoxy. The most extreme unbelievers, though recognising in him an eloquent antagonist of traditional religion, felt that they had also met a powerful opponent of their atheism and materialism; while men who did not go beyond philosophical deism, were bitter against him as a deserter from the ranks of philosophy. "Have you read," Voltaire wrote to a friend, "the prose of Sieur Jean Jacques? His 'Vicaire Savoyard' deserves all possible chastisement. The Judas abandons us; and what a time has he chosen to abandon us! The hour when our philosophy was about to triumph all along the line." The hour of triumph he certainly did something

to postpone; and he aided not a little in bringing about a reaction in that French society which could pass at a bound from unbelief to devotion, and which, as Duclos said, "as soon as they are induced to believe in a God, believe in the baptism of bells." Listening so long to endless raillery, incessant epigram, and clever phrases, society turned with a sense of relief to a man so unartificial and so earnest, who spoke what he believed and what others secretly felt. There was power, freshness, and brilliancy of style to please their intellectual taste, and an intensity of religious fervour to appeal to their spiritual instincts. "Born," as Grimm said, "with the qualities of the chief of a sect, Rousseau was out of place in an age whose spirit tends to a general association of culture and philosophy, based on a grand indifference to all particular opinions. Two hundred years ago, he would have played a great part: as a reformer, he would have been the soul of a revolution." Even in his own age, he had a lasting religious influence with many who now dared to express the convictions which they had hitherto been ashamed to own. In after-years, inspired by his teaching, Robespierre maintained the belief in a God as essential to society; and it was in the Hermitage that he spent the night before he inaugurated the worship of the Supreme Being amidst the enthusiastic crowds in the Champ de Mars. Fiercely Rousseau attacked every philosophical objection to religion he met around him.

"Fly," he passionately exclaims,—"fly from those who, under pretext of explaining nature, sow in the hearts of men desolating doctrines, and whose scepticism is a hundred times more positive and dogmatic than the decided tone of

their adversaries. Under the haughty pretext that they alone are enlightened, true, and sincere, they subject us imperiously to their peremptory decisions, and pretend to give us, for the true principles of things, unintelligible systems, built on their own imagination. At the same time, overturning, destroying, trampling under foot all that men respect, they remove from the afflicted the last consolation of their misery, from the rich and powerful the sole curb to their passions: they tear from the heart remorse for crime, the hope of virtue, and boast themselves benefactors of humanity! Never, say they, is truth hurtful to man. I believe so too; and that is, in my opinion, a great proof that what they teach is not the truth."

When he runs counter to orthodox opinions, there is no irreverence in his tone, no laughter in his ridicule, and no levity in that sarcasm with which he scathes the doctrine that religion or salvation depends on creed: there is rather a fierce conviction in his utterance, which is as like the spirit of Pascal as it is unlike the style of Voltaire. And yet, while Parliament condemned 'Emile' for its dangerous principles, which "weakened the respect and love for kings," the Archbishop of Paris in his pastoral denounced "the said book as containing abominable doctrine, erroneous, impious, blasphemous, and heretical."

CHAPTER XI.

PERSECUTION.

'EMILE' appeared in May 1762, and soon after it was published there were signs of danger. Everybody praised it in private; none dared applaud it in public. The Comtesse de Boufflers wrote saying that the author of such a work deserved a statue; but begged that her letter might be returned. D'Alembert wrote a note saying that the book put the author at the head of men of letters; but did not sign it. Duclos admired the work; but never referred to it in any letter. Before it appeared, friends feared persecution; and now their fears were realised. It was soon apparent that the Savoyard Vicar's Confession would be the source of calamity. Parliament was at this time attacking the Jesuits, but had a great desire to show that though they intended to abolish a religious Order, they still maintained religion. Rousseau was charged not only with saying that a man could be saved without believing in a God, but even with asserting that the Christian religion did not exist. Such a preposterous charge may well have astonished Jean Jacques, who all along could not believe "that the only man in France who believed in

a God was to be persecuted by the defenders of Christianity." Parliament ordered the book to be burned (June 11th), and the author to be arrested. Worse still, by orders of the Council of Geneva—obsequiously following the example and instigated by the Ministry of France—both 'Emile' and the 'Social Contract' were burned on the 17th of June in his native town.

It was two o'clock in the morning of the 9th of June, after Jean Jacques, according to his habit, had read the Bible, and was half dreaming over the story of the Levite of Ephraim, which he had just finished, when Thérèse entered his room with letters from Madame de Luxemburg, and from the Prince de Conti, announcing that, at seven o'clock the next morning, an order would be put in force to arrest him; but that a promise had been got not to pursue him if he escaped. Jean Jacques rose, went to the castle, saw the Duke and Duchess, and Madame de Boufflers, who had just arrived, and who were solicitous that he should go away. This he did next day, in a chaise given him by the Duke, passing the soldiers sent to arrest him. In the first three days of his journey he composed, greatly to his satisfaction, the first three prose cantos of the 'Levite of Ephraim.' The moment he entered the canton of Berne, he got out of the carriage, and, to the astonishment of the coachman, who thought him mad, he knelt and kissed the ground, exclaiming in an ecstasy, "Heaven, thou protector of virtue, be praised! I touch a land of liberty."

At Yverdun he was received by a friend, M. Roguin, and was about to take up his abode in a house offered to him, when an outcry arose against him in the canton

of Berne; and he was obliged to abandon this refuge on the receipt of an order from the Council. Thrust out of Berne, debarred from Geneva, banished from France, at last he accepted the proposal of a niece of M. Roguin, that he should go to Motiers, in the Val de Travers, in Neuchâtel, on the other side of the mountain, and there live in a furnished but unoccupied house belonging to her son. This valley, about six miles long and a mile and a half wide, is formed by two chains of mountains, which are branches of Mount Jura. The river Reuse flows through it from north to south, the mountains throw their shadows, intercepting the sun's rays, which come late and go early, giving more dreariness to the bare and dull scenery. It was not a bright place in summer, and it was dismal in winter, when the snow covered the grey rocks and scanty dark firs. But here Jean Jacques at least had peace; and in Motiers, one of the several villages in the Vale, he found a grateful shelter. Neuchâtel then belonged to Prussia, and he thought it incumbent upon him to write to the king, and to Keith, the Earl Marischal, announcing his arrival, and requesting leave to stay in the only shelter left to him on earth.

"I have spoken much evil of you," he wrote to Frederick; "perhaps I shall speak yet more. However, driven from France, from Geneva, and from the canton of Berne, I am come to seek shelter in your states. Perhaps I was wrong in not doing so at first: this is an eulogy of which you are worthy. Sire, I have deserved no favour from you, and I seek none; but I thought it my duty to inform your Majesty that I am in your power, and that I am so by my own choice. Your Majesty may dispose of me as you may think proper."

The king neither liked Rousseau nor his works, but he was ready to shelter the fugitive philosopher, and made him offers of kindness, which were, of course, declined. Marshal Keith, who was Governor of Neuchâtel, proved a firm and honest friend to the recluse, who soon learned to call him "father." He lived at Colombier, six leagues off, and there Rousseau often went to see him, while he himself would come on pretence of shooting quails to see "his son," his "excellent savage," as he called the fugitive. In his new home, Rousseau assumed the Armenian dress, which long ago he had thought of wearing as an appropriate costume for an invalid; but, afraid of ridicule, he had refrained from putting it on till now, when fresh attacks of his disorder induced him to assume it, after consulting the pastor if he could decently wear it in church. He desired now to live a quiet, obscure life; and he hoped that peaceful years were in store for him in this remote valley, living as a poor man with the poor. He began to learn to make laces, and, like the women, he carried his cushion with him when he went to pay visits, or sat down to work at his door. The laces he gave to young women of his acquaintance at their marriage, on condition of their suckling their children. Time passed peacefully in this dull valley, with its duller peasantry. At home he employed himself compiling his Dictionary of Music; and amused his leisure by playing upon the harpsichord, or sometimes at cap-and-ball (*bilboquet*). In fine weather he took long rambles with friends among the mountains, or went off botanising, walking with bare head in the burning sun. He was pleasant and chatty with the people, to whom he was kind and generous, and playful with the

children. Friends found him cheerful and sometimes merry sitting in his straw chair, or seated at the simple fare cooked by Thérèse, who waited on the guests; though obtruders, whom he took for spies, found him curt and rude. The post brought him hosts of letters of all sorts, full of threats, expostulations, questions on education and religion; and he righteously complains that in nine months he had nine louis to pay for postage. The Prince of Würtemberg besought the advice of the author of 'Emile' as to the education of his daughter aged only four months, and constantly sent minute details of the infant's ways, wants, and diet; while Rousseau, with much gravity and patience, gave directions for its bringing up. He had to learn from his foolish and Serene Highness how little Sophie had "two teeth through," how she caressed her nurse, how the poor little creature was kept naked in all weather in the open air, and wore no hat in the snow and rain, in order to harden it—or kill it.

In Motiers Rousseau composed a pamphlet which, for trenchant style and brilliant argument, is unsurpassed by anything he ever wrote. Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris, in August 1762, had issued a pastoral against Rousseau and his writings, to be read in all the churches of his diocese. This production is not very vigorous, but so well written that it was suspected that it must have had some more able author than the worthy prelate. "Have you read my mandate?" he was said to have asked Piron one day. "No—and you?" answered the poet. In November of 1762 Rousseau finished his reply to it. He sets forth, with the utmost force and dignity, his hard case in being persecuted throughout Europe for "sounding the tocsin of

anarchy and the trumpet of atheism" in works not worse than his other writings, which were universally praised. He hints at intrigues of philosophers against him, which have been at the bottom of all this sudden opprobrium, for he could tell, if he liked, "the laughable cause why all the states of Europe were leagued against the son of a watchmaker." He is astonished that a book which defends the cause of God, which inculcates every virtue, which maintains true religion, should have been singled out for odium in an age when philosophers sapped the basis of virtue, and when even few priests believed in God. "If there were a government truly enlightened in Europe, it would have done honour and erected a statue to the author of 'Emile.'" He defends with fine fence and admirable skill his arguments in the Vicar's Confession, which the Archbishop had tried elaborately to confute. And, rising to fierce scorn and indignation, he exclaims:—

"You treat me as impious! but of what impiety can you accuse me, who never spoke of the Supreme Being but to render Him the glory due to Him; nor of my neighbour, but to incite every one to love him? The impious are they who profane unworthily the cause of God by making it serve the passions of men. The impious are they who, daring to set themselves up for interpreters of the will of the Deity, for the arbiters between Him and man, exact for themselves the honours due to Him alone. The impious are they who arrogate to themselves the right of exercising the power of God upon earth, and who wish to open and shut the gates of heaven at their will. The impious are they who make libels to be read in churches. At this horrible idea my blood boils, and tears of indignation flow from my eyes. Ye priests of the God of peace, doubt not that one day you shall render account of the use you have made of His house. Ye

men in places of dignity discoursing at your ease, acknowledging no other right than your own, no other laws than such as yourselves impose, you are so far from thinking yourselves bound to be just, that you do not consider yourselves obliged to be humane. . . . When you insult us with impunity, we are not permitted to complain; and if we prove our innocence, and that you are in the wrong, we are accused of want of respect. Monseigneur, you have insulted me publicly; I have proved that you have calumniated me. If you were a private individual like myself, so that I could cite you before a tribunal of equity, and both of us appeared, —myself with my book and you with your mandate,—you assuredly would be declared guilty, and condemned to make to me a reparation as public as the offence has been. But you hold a rank which dispenses you from being just, and I am nobody. Meanwhile, you who profess the Gospel—you, prelate, ordained to teach others their duty, you know yours in such a case. For my part, I have done mine. I have no more to say to you, and I am silent."

In such powerful strain he speaks his last word against the Church that hated him, though so many of its priests had far less faith and none of the courage of the man they pursued.

A year after the edict of the Genevan Council against him, Rousseau, who had waited to see if his fellow-citizens would undo the sentence, determined to renounce his ungrateful country, and wrote, solemnly giving up his citizenship of Geneva. This proceeding stirred up those favourable to Rousseau to represent his case to the Council, which, however, remained resolutely by its decision. Pamphlets appeared on the different sides; "Letters from the Country," by Tronchin, the procureur-general (brother of the famous physician), was the one most effective on the anti-Rousseau side.

Jean Jacques determined to reply; and in his "Letters from the Mountain" he threw down the gauntlet. The sensation caused was immense; the spirit in which they were written embittered his enemies, and shocked many of his friends, although their author prided himself on the "stoical moderation" which pervaded them. The vigour of many portions is remarkable. Some of his religious arguments are full of interest still, though the pamphleteering interest of much of the work is gone. He reasons vigorously against the legality and justice of the conduct of the Council of Geneva. He discusses politics and theology without reserve, without compromise. He examines minutely the constitution of republican bodies and their mode of government. He argues that even if heterodoxy is found in his works, it is not for the State to punish it; he argues the whole question as to the evidence for miracles themselves, and of their use as evidence for a religion; he denies—not, however, in the most pacifying manner—that he is responsible for the opinions expressed by the Savoyard Vicar. The work was burned at the Hague (January 22, 1763); it was condemned in Geneva; it was ordered by the Parliament of Paris to be burned along with Voltaire's 'Philosophical Dictionary' (April 1765)—a companionship, no doubt, which gave grim satisfaction to Jean Jacques.

Slowly the rumours of all this spread into the Val de Travers. The pastor took alarm now, and as the time of communion drew near, gave him advice to absent himself from the table,—to which Rousseau refused to listen, and resolved to appear and convince the consistory by a telling speech. Unfortunately, though he

composed it, tried to commit it to memory with deplorable effort, and repeated it without a fault in bed—when he rose in the morning he found, with humiliation, he could not remember two sentences. The ministers stirred up the pious horror of the people against the heretic. From pulpits he was denounced as Antichrist; his very Armenian dress gave an air of heresy to his appearance; his lonely search for herbs had something diabolical about it; the Swiss women hated him because he was said to have taught that women had no souls. Followed sometimes by the hootings of the people, and a shower of stones as he passed by the houses, he thought he heard the inmates exclaim, "Bring me my gun, that I may fire at him." To add to this animosity, a vile letter appeared anonymously, accusing of atrocious crimes this "author of two hissed comedies." This 'Sentiment des Citoyens' pretends to defend religion against the "blasphemies" of "a hypocrite who bears still the wretched marks of his debauches, and who, disguised as a mountebank, drags with him from village to village, and from mountain to mountain, the unfortunate woman whose mother he had virtually killed, and whose children he exposed at the gates of a hospital, rejecting the cares which a charitable person wished to take of them, and abjuring all the sentiments of nature, as he throws off those of honour and religion." This letter, "written not with ink, but in the water of Phlegethon," Rousseau himself boldly reprinted in Paris, as the best way of refuting the libel, and added a preface charging Vernes, a minister of Geneva, and his personal friend, with being the author; and though the charge was false, he remained "as certain as of his existence" that it was true.

In fact, it was a shabby and malicious work of Voltaire, who had been enraged by some pleasantries in the "Letters," where he was revealed as the author of the 'Sermon des Cinquante,' of which he had denied the authorship with his usual audacity and mendacity, to put people off the scent even denouncing it as "the most violent libel ever made against Christianity." Hence he vented his spleen on Rousseau by increasing the odium against his sore-beset enemy, to whom he had even offered a home with dubious sincerity.

While involved in polemics, Jean Jacques was engaged in more peaceful labours. Corsica having been delivered by Paoli in 1763, communications were entered into by Buttafocco with Rousseau for the drawing up of a constitution for that island of which he had spoken so highly in the 'Social Contract.' He warmly entered into the project, thought of settling in the island, and then, with matured knowledge, forming an enduring code for so brave a people. Boswell, who had visited Keith at Colombier, was introduced to the great French writer, and at his instigation paid his famous visit to Corsica, of which the world afterwards heard enough, and Dr Johnson complained he heard a good deal too much.

Unpopular as Rousseau was becoming among the simple fanatics of Val de Travers, there was no explosion of general wrath until September 1764. At midnight, as he reported to the public authorities, a shower of stones was hurled against the door and window; the door of the court was forced, and the inmates were in danger of their lives.[1] On this alarm, whether exagger-

[1] Gaberel gives the statement of an old woman who, when a child, used to annoy and frighten Jean Jacques, from which it would seem

ated or not, the Council of State instituted inquiries, and offered rewards for the discovery of the offenders. Friends saw clearly that Rousseau could no longer resist the storm, and advised him to leave Motiers. There was no lack of places of refuge offered to him; but his heart clung to Switzerland, and he remembered the little island of St Pierre, on Lake Bienne, where he had botanised the previous year, and the quiet beauty of which had fascinated him. There he and Thérèse went for refuge, and stayed with the receiver of the island; and soon he felt as if in Paradise, for as usual all his sorrows and cares were at once forgotten in the enjoyment of the present. There were no hollow friends, no sincere enemies here. He could search for plants among the woods and fields; he could join merrily in the haymaking or fruit-gathering, climbing up the apple-trees, with simple forgetfulness of the past in the simple happiness of the hour. It was very joy to him to lie in a boat in the mid-day sun, and fall into endless reveries while the boat floated at its will; to sit on the grass at the hill-top, and gaze for hours on the Bernese Alps far off; or to sit on the beach and watch the wavelets break gently at his

that the children used to hide behind the trees and cry, "Take care, M. Rousseau; they will come to take you to-morrow,"—working on the fears of a half-crazy man. The "assault" on the house, in which she shared, was really due, she asserted, to Thérèse, who got the children to carry big stones into the gallery, and throw one or two small stones at the windows (Rousseau et les Genevois, p. 22). Servan (Réflexions sur les Confessions) was told by a person who saw the house the same day, that the stones were too large to come through the windows; while D'Escherny, in his Mélanges de Littérature, asserts that a single pane of glass was broken. See, however, Berthoud's Rousseau au Val de Travers, p. 304, where Rousseau's account gains some corroboration.

feet: for the movement of the water, swelling and falling at intervals, striking on both ear and eye, gave him a delight in existing without the trouble of thinking. If any intruder came to see him, he rushed through a trap-door to the garret, and sought safety from the obtrusive world, grumbling to his host as he disappeared over the stove, "I am not in a menagerie." He and his humble friends would saunter out in the fresh evening air, or sit down and chat and laugh, and "sing some old song till they were full of happiness, and wish for another day like the last."[1]

This peace was cruelly broken, after about two months of the happiest days he ever spent. The Government of Berne—in which canton St Pierre lay—gave orders, in October, that he must quit the territory. He was in despair. He was weary of his fugitive career; he was ill, it was nearly winter, and in his perplexity he piteously wrote, begging that he might be allowed, at his own expense, to rest the remainder of his days imprisoned in one of the State castles, without paper, or pen, or communications with the world,—with only a few books to read, and liberty to walk now and then in the garden. The answer he received was a peremptory command to leave the State within twenty-four hours. Where should he go? the poor fugitive wondered. He thought of Corsica, amongst whose leaders he had friends; of Potsdam, where Keith would protect him; of Normandy, where Madame d'Houdetot offered him a shelter. At last he decided on Berlin, and set out, but got no farther than Strasburg, where he was welcomed with effusion, and where the "Devin du Village" was performed in his

[1] Rêveries, Promenade V.

honour in the theatre. He now began to fear the cold and rude climate of North Germany, and accepted the suggestion of friends to go to England, where Hume charged himself with the responsibility of finding a retreat quiet and agreeable to him. On December 11th, Rousseau arrived in Paris.

Rooms were lent him by Prince de Conti in the Hotel St Simon, in the privileged quarter of the Temple, of which the Prince was grand prior, and where no *lettres de cachet* could touch him. His reappearance created a great excitement; everything he said and wore was subject of eager talk. When Rousseau showed himself in the streets or at a *café*, the crowd was enormous to see him. "If you asked," says Grimm, "one half of the people what they were doing, they replied they wanted to see Jean Jacques; and if asked who he was, they replied that they did not know anything about that, but that they were waiting to see him pass."

CHAPTER XII.

IN ENGLAND.

On the 13th of January 1766 Rousseau arrived in England, and as he landed he silently embraced his friend and covered him with kisses and tears. Boswell, proud of being associated with any scrap of celebrity, brought over Thérèse a little later. Rousseau found in London that his fame was as great as in Paris. All society, including the Prince of Wales *incognito*, called on him in Buckingham Street; the theatres were crowded to gaze on him. He was oppressed by attentions in which Thérèse also shared. He, however, declined the invitations for her to accompany him into fashionable circles: "Madlle. le Vasseur is a good and very estimable person, but not fit for grand society," he answered.[1] Meanwhile Dr Johnson, at the Mitre, passed his boisterous comment on him to Boswell as "a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society." "Sir, I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I would like to see him work at the plantations." Though Hume pronounced him "modest,

[1] Unpublished letter. Royal Society of Edinburgh.

gentle, mild, and good-humoured," he, too, had his little difficulties with his friend, whom he found not free from bad humours, or from obstinacy in giving vent to them. On one occasion it required all his efforts to prevent Rousseau staying away from the theatre, where Garrick had made special arrangements for him, and where the king was to be present to see him, all because his dog "Sultan" would, he feared, howl in his lodgings during his absence. Perhaps this was the night in which Mrs Garrick had to hold his skirts in terror, lest he should fall into the pit in his anxiety to show himself in the front of the box. He tired of lodging in London and its neighbourhood, and longed for the country solitude. Various places were proposed for his residence, and at last Mr Davenport, a gentleman of large fortune, placed at his command his house at Wootton, in the Peak of Derby, and the offer was accepted, though Rousseau insisted on paying £30 a-year as board for himself and Thérèse.

Wootton lies at the foot of the Weaver hills, about six miles from Ashbourne, and is situated in a rugged, solitary part of the country, with much loveliness in the green hills and woods around, and in the neighbouring beautiful dales of the Peak; with much dreariness in the silent moorland wastes, and the wild landscape which meets the eye as one stands on the ridge of the green Weaver. The district is so high that the flowers of spring are sometimes in full bloom in the middle of June; and no wonder the refugee wearied sometimes to see more "of the sun and of his friends." The house was in charge of a very old housekeeper, who had been Mr Davenport's nurse, to whom Thérèse, as

usual, quickly made herself obnoxious. Rousseau arrived in the bleak March, when the snow was on the ground; and in the desolate house, neither being able to understand a word of English, Thérèse spoke with the servants by signs. At the end of the month he writes: "It has been freezing ever since I came here; it has snowed incessantly; the wind cuts the face. In spite of all this, I would rather live in a hole of one of the rabbits of this warren than in the finest room in London."[1] There were kind neighbours who visited without intruding upon him; and those who did intrude were obliged, to his amusement, only to look at him vacantly and in silence, for he did not know English, and they could not speak a word of French. There was a rich variety of plants to gratify the botanist's heart, wild scenery to remind him somewhat of the Jura district; while the villagers never troubled this meagre little man, with piercing eyes and restless gait, in strange dress, whom they vaguely thought was an exiled king.

Shortly after his arrival in England, Hume kindly negotiated for a pension of £100 for his friend, who had only £70 a-year of his own, and these services were the beginning of misfortunes. The promise of a pension from the king had been obtained in January, but there arose misunderstandings as to the conditions of its being accepted. Hume understood Rousseau to say he would only accept it if given privately; and when he found that the reverse was the case, and that Jean Jacques would only take it if given publicly, he got General Conway to ask the king to change the conditions. As months passed by, Jean Jacques' mind,

[1] Unpublished letter. Royal Society of Edinburgh.

in his solitary residence, with dull days and sleepless nights, became full of dark thoughts and sinister suspicions, which at last broke out in a letter accusing Hume of having entered into a conspiracy with Voltaire and D'Alembert to bring him to England in order to ruin him; and he saw in those mistakes about the pension a subtle plot to blacken his character. His morbid rage had been fiercely excited by an ironical letter[1] which had appeared when he was in Paris, purporting to be written to him by the King of Prussia. Rousseau at first attributed it to Voltaire, then to D'Alembert; but it was really by Horace Walpole, who was also in Paris at the time. Hume's conduct with regard to this epistle, as well as to other matters, seemed atrocious in the eyes of Jean Jacques, who in July wrote his famous letter, full of the maddest charges, written in the most beautiful of handwriting. He complains that Hume introduced him to Walpole, while knowing him to be the author of the forged letter; that Hume had once angrily denied that his enemy D'Alembert was a cunning and dishonourable man; that Hume had lived in London with a son of Dr Tronchin, who was his mortal foe; that it was Hume's fault that the newspapers and public of England, at first so enthusiastic, were now silent or unfavourable to him; that Hume, on the first night of their departure from Paris, had called out in his dreams vehemently, "*Je tiens Jean Jacques Rousseau*"—words which were now

[1] It begins: "My dear Jean Jacques, you have renounced Geneva, your native place. You have been expelled from Switzerland, a country so extolled in your writings; France has issued a warrant against you: therefore come to me. I admire your talents; I am amused by your dreamings; though—let me tell you the truth—they absorb you too much and too long," &c.

proved full of evil meaning; that Hume had sometimes eyed him with a sardonic look, which filled him with trouble at the time; that on one of those occasions he had fallen on Hume's neck and embraced him, and, choked with tears, cried out, "No, no; David Hume is no traitor!" whereupon Hume had quietly returned his embrace, and, patting him on the back, said several times, "*Quoi, mon cher monsieur? Eh? mon cher monsieur! Quoi donc, mon cher monsieur?*" that Hume was inquisitive, had often been alone with Thérèse, and had gone out of the room after his servant, evidently in order to read Jean Jacques' letters, which she had in her hand. Such are some of the extraordinary charges which were brought against the good-natured, phlegmatic historian, who, unfortunately, instead of quietly regarding them as the morbid fancies of a disordered mind, embittered the quarrel by the reply he sent, and the publicity he gave it. In hot haste he reported "the atrocity" of Jean Jacques to D'Holbach, who had before in Paris warned him he was cherishing a serpent, and he bade him announce the news to his friends. Never was there such excitement as when there was read at a supper at M. Necker's this letter, the first words of which were, "My dear baron, Jean Jacques is a villain." Not content with this, Hume also wrote to D'Alembert, and desired him to tell others, even Voltaire. It would have been well if the historian had remembered his own true words about his unhappy enemy: "He has only *felt* during the whole course of his life, and in this respect his sensibility rises to a pitch beyond what I have seen any example of; but it still gives him a more acute feeling of pain than of pleasure. He is like a man who

was stript, not only of his clothes, but of his skin, and turned out in that situation to combat with the rude and boisterous elements."[1] An account of the quarrel was published by Hume in English and French—for it was feared Rousseau in his memoirs would give posterity a false account of the rupture. Society on both sides of the Channel were as excited as by an international war, and pamphlets swarmed from the press on opposite sides of the ridiculous yet melancholy dispute.

During all this wretched controversy, Jean Jacques did not publish a word. In his lonely house at Wootton he in solitude bewailed his misery and brooded over this dire conspiracy against him. He devoted himself to more lasting work. The autumn and winter of 1767 he spent in writing the first part of his 'Confessions.' He had formed the project of writing his memoirs years ago at Montmorency, and at Motiers had collected letters and papers to assist his memory. He had resolved at that time to show the world the real nature of the man they were maligning; and, though he considered himself "the best of men," he resolved to hide no fault, however odious. Now he wrote his 'Confessions' under the impression that the whole world was false to him, and he therefore determined to tell posterity what the man really was whom his age so grievously misjudged. Of course the morbid suspicions of the writer colour every page that relates to his intercourse with living friends; and the last part, written at Monquin and Paris, bringing his story down to his departure for England, shows how these suspicions had grown upon him, while in the footnotes he adds his

[1] Burton's Life of Hume, ii. 314.

malign interpretations of actions to which he had attributed honest motives when he first wrote. No autobiography has equalled its startling frankness and intense self-consciousness, for which we are prepared by the opening words:—

"I begin an enterprise which has never had an example, and which will never have an imitation. I wish to show to my fellow-creatures a man in all the truth of nature; and that man is myself—myself alone. I feel my heart, and I know other men. I am not made as those whom I have seen, and I venture to believe that I am not made like any who exist. If I am not better, at least I am different. Let the trumpet of the last judgment sound when it may, I shall come, the book in my hand, to present myself before the Sovereign Judge. I shall say aloud, 'See what I have done, what I have thought, what I was. I have spoken the good and evil with equal frankness; I have concealed no sin, I have added no virtue; and if I have used any slight adornment, that was only to supply a void occasioned by defect of memory. I may have supposed that to be true which I was not certain of being so, but never that which I knew to be false. I have shown myself such as I am,—contemptible and vile when I have been so; kind, generous, and sublime when I was so. I have unveiled my inner nature, such as Thou, Eternal Being, hast seen it. Gather around me the innumerable crowd of my fellow-men; let them hear my confessions, weep over my indignities, and blush for my miseries. Let each in his turn open his heart at the foot of Thy throne with the same sincerity, and then let any one say, if he dare, '*I am better than that man!*'"

This glorified egotism is without a parallel; and after the terrible frankness with which he relates his delinquencies and his amours, his hates, his passions, and his wrongs, he can only too truly boast of the honesty with

which he presents his character before the world—naked, but not ashamed. Not only does he tell of his youthful knaveries, which are without edification for any being, but he narrates incidents a man hardly mentions to his nearest friend, all unconscious of their grossness, and never feeling that they degrade those chapters which contain scenes of exquisite beauty. From passages of home-life or of rural simplicity, sweet as the fragrance of new-mown grass, we turn to passages of meanness and impurity, told with wonderful simplicity of heart and with all his grace of style. Amidst all the picturesque incidents of country and of social life, the portraits drawn with rare skill, and pastoral scenes painted with admirable vividness of memory or of fancy, we meet with a man who, while he pities himself, suspects or hates almost every one who comes closely in contact with him. The Duc de Luxemburg, Malesherbes, Keith, St Lambert, Madame d'Houdetot, are of the happy few who escape his animosity; but almost all other friends gain his disdain, his distrust, or his dislike. Baron Grimm he hates with a perfect hatred; Diderot and D'Holbach incur his bitter anger; D'Alembert, as well as Madame de Luxemburg, he suspects of stealing his papers; Madame d'Epinay he charges with deceit and jealousy; the Comtesse de Boufflers, one of his truest friends, whom he has coarsely accused of at first making love to him, he asserts felt towards him "implacable hatred." Diderot wisely said, "Too many people would be wrong if Jean Jacques were right." In his 'Confessions,' in order to vindicate his own character, he cares not whose feelings he wounds, whose character he maligns, or whose reputation he crushes. He shows him-

self a man who never acted from duty if it clashed with his interests; a man ungrateful by nature (as he told Malesherbes), and suspicious in temper, who would by churlish refusal wound the feelings of any who confer a favour, rather than with courtesy receive an obligation which might lessen his freedom; a man who winced under rank because it reminded him of his social inferiority, and was proud with the pride of a lackey who has given up his place, and is anxious to show his independence; a man who owned his sins with the humility of a publican, and indemnified himself by asserting his virtues with somewhat of the arrogance of a Pharisee. Yet, to redeem this, one thinks with relief of his fidelity to the dull partner of his life; his sympathy with the oppressed, and his ready charity given out of his own poverty to his poorer neighbours;[1] his reverence in an age that was irreverent; his courage in asserting his opinions, and his true dignity in maintaining them at every cost; his independence in conduct which never yielded to wealth or rank. In his dreamy, sensitive, egoistic nature, to which work was painful, self-denial impossible, and impulse all-powerful, we may rather see a man who was the dupe of his own feelings, than the charlatan his enemies deemed him. "I am not made like other men," he has truly said; and in no case is more perplexingly illustrated the difficulty of deciding at what stage of mental disorder moral responsibility ends, and where censure of a heart that is bad should turn to pity for a mind that is unhinged. Yet when

[1] Berthoud's Rousseau, sa vie au Val de Travers, p. 334. He sent 350 francs in the wretched winter of 1766-67 to his compatriots —more than a fourth of his income.

the 'Confessions' were published (1781-88) with their jealous accusations, it was natural that those who before had only pitied him should now condemn him, and that the voices of his remaining friends who had been brave in his praise should henceforth be silent, even in his defence.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST YEARS.

The winter at Wootton was not a happy one. The weather was extremely bad, and Rousseau could not get out to botanise as he was wont, while indoors there was not much to amuse the short days and long nights, but writing and playing on the spinet — although there were times when he enjoyed life, seeing and rambling about with friends, and making botanical excursions with the young Duchess of Portland. Thérèse added little to his peace, and worried him by quarrels with the servant, with whom she could only speak by signs or scanty broken English; and she turned his bitter thoughts from his enemies to complaints of ashes being put into the victuals. Day by day he became more morose, more suspicious, more unsettled. Everybody he looked upon as in conspiracy against him, and in every seeming kindness he saw some base motive at work. He fancied himself watched; he thought that every letter he got had been intercepted and opened.

At last he resolved to take flight; and, leaving all his papers and money behind him, in May he fled from Wootton. No one knew whither he had gone, until, a

fortnight after, he was heard of at Spalding, in Lincolnshire; but when inquiry was made, he had disappeared. From this place he had written a letter to the Lord Chancellor (styling himself "Herbalist to the Duchess of Portland"), begging him to appoint a guard at his expense to escort him out of a kingdom full of enemies. From Dover he wrote to General Conway, who had befriended him, saying that plotters were everywhere looking for him, fearful lest, if he left the country, he would reveal the persecutions he had undergone; but if he were permitted to escape, he promised that he "would never divulge the wrongs he had suffered." On the night of May 20th he got to Calais. When he reached France, his painful excitement ceased, and he was calm and collected. On his arrival, he was received with all honour at Amiens, and the Marquis de Mirabeau settled him at Fleury-sous-Meudon, one of his seven chateaus, under the name of "M. Jacques." Mirabeau had been a correspondent of Rousseau for some time, and was an immense admirer of all that he wrote; and, as a *doctrinaire*, he was full of theories, with which he was wont to weary Jean Jacques. In theory he was a "friend of the people," in fact he was a keen aristocrat; in profession he hated despotism, in practice he was a despot on his estates, and a tyrant at home. The hot-headed author of the 'Ami des Hommes' was indeed, as Gibbon said, "an extraordinary man, with imagination enough for twelve, and without common-sense enough for one." While in England, at Fleury, and at Trye, Rousseau constantly received from him well-meant letters of unpleasant advice, political hobbies to discuss, and controversial books to study, till

in despair the poor recluse wrote, "I adjure you, have pity on my state and my misfortune; leave in peace my dying head, and no more awaken ideas nearly extinguished. Love me always, but do not send me any more books to read, and do not require me any more to read them." A few weeks were enough at Fleury, and Rousseau accepted the Prince de Conti's offer of the use of his chateau at Trye, near Gisors. There he went and lived under the name of "Renou," for the order of Parliament for his arrest was still in force.

For about a year he remained (June 1767 to June 1768). During the time he carried on his old employments, continuing the narration of his 'Confessions,' arranging for the publication of his Dictionary of Music, botanising, and dreaming. His morbid suspicions, however, returned with melancholy strength. He was certain that the servants insulted him, and were emissaries of Hume; and when a servant died suddenly, he demanded a *post-mortem* examination, lest he should be accused of poisoning him. He at last fled with Thérèse from Trye, and wandered from place to place, seeking rest and finding none for his troubled spirit and his weary body. It is pitiful to watch these two forlorn wanderers, united in fate but not in heart, travelling aimlessly with their poor scanty baggage, without home and without hope, from refuge to refuge. At Bourgoin they lived in poor inns; and while there he went through a little ceremony with Thérèse which he fancied constituted a marriage. One day, seated at table with her and two guests, he solemnly declared she was his wife. "This good and seemly engagement was contracted," he wrote, "in all the simplicity but also in all the truth

of nature, in the presence of two men of worth and honour." He went in 1769 to Monquin, where a lady lent him a house, and there he stayed for eighteen months. During summer, in the cool shade of the woods, and in the fresh breezes amongst the hills, he would forget his cares, feeling sure enemies could not find him there; and in the eagerness of seeking some rare moss, or while gently taming the swallows that confidingly settled in his room, all the world's conspiracies passed for a time from the memory of the old man. There was not much, after all, to comfort him in that shelter. Thérèse was tired of him, and neglected him, wearied by his odd ways and his lonely habits and morose moods, during which days would pass without his speaking a word to her; and some pity must be felt for the forlorn woman in her ill-assorted life with a man whom she never understood either in his success or in his misery. Rousseau pleaded with her against this coldness and alienation in a letter full of wonderful tenderness and pathos, which reveals the dreariness of the strange household. In the winter months of 1770, when the snow was thick around, the bitter cold pierced the room in which he lived, so that, even as he sat by the fire, his fingers were numb. There he brooded over his grievances and his enemies, composed the later books of his 'Confessions' with every bitter feeling excited and every suspicion quickened, and wrote to his few friends those letters which seem wails of despair: "What! always to see men false, wicked, malevolent! always masks, always traitors, and not one single face of a man! Ah! this life to me is insupportable; and as its end can be the only close to my troubles, I desire to leave it; and this will be the be-

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ginning of that felicity for which I feel myself born, and which I have vainly sought on earth. How I long for that happy time!" [1]

In July he returned to Paris to begin life anew, and to seek again that peace amidst society he could not find beyond its pale. He gave up his Armenian dress, and began his old pursuit of a copyist of music at ten sous a page. For a time the delusions passed into the background of his thoughts, and the dark clouds of misery and melancholy were somewhat lifted from his spirit. His life assumed a simple routine. In summer he rose at five o'clock in the morning, and copied music till half-past seven, when he took his frugal breakfast, during which he arranged his new plants. Then he returned to work till dinner at half-past twelve, after which he went out to a *café*, and thence passed on his solitary walks, returning at night, and retiring to bed at half-past nine. His music-copying—a mechanical work which suited his mental indolence, and left him free to muse—gained him food: there was no lack of orders, and he was content if he earned fifty sous a-day. The shabby stairs of his lodging in the fifth storey of the Rue Platrière were beset by people of rank, who came to see him on every possible pretext, and indeed so numerously they came, that at last he refused to see any except customers. Bernardin de St Pierre, whose fame as author of 'Paul and Virginia' was not yet won, was fortunate enough to make

[1] Letter to St Germain, Feb. 17, 1770. Most of his letters at this time he heads with a dismal quatrain:—

"Pauvres aveugles que nous sommes,
Ciel rémarque les imposteurs,
Et force leur barbares cœurs
A s'ouvrir aux regards des hommes."

the acquaintance of Rousseau, and he tells us how he looked and how he lived at this time:—

"He was thin, and of middle height. One of his shoulders seemed higher than the other; perhaps this was due to some natural defect, or the attitude he assumed at his work, or to age, which made him stoop, for he was then sixty: in other respects he was very well proportioned. He had a brown complexion, with colour on his cheek-bones; a beautiful mouth, a nose well formed, the forehead round and high, and eyes full of fire. The oblique lines which fell from his nostrils to the extremities of his mouth, and which gave character to the countenance, expressed great sensibility. One noted in his face three or four characters: melancholy by the hollowness of the eyes and the depression of the eyebrows; a profound sadness by the wrinkles on the forehead; a very lively and even caustic gaiety by a thousand little creases at the exterior angles of the eyes, the orbits of which disappeared when he laughed."

In the little room where he lived and worked there stood his spinet, two little beds, a table, and several chairs, which formed his whole furniture. On the walls were a plan of the park and forest of Montmorency, and an engraving of George III. His wife, now very fond of speaking of Jean Jacques as "my husband" to visitors, sat cutting linen; a canary sang in a cage near the ceiling; tame sparrows came to eat crumbs at the open windows; while Rousseau, in an overcoat and white cap, copied music.

Although he did not favour society, he did not altogether shrink from it. He might sometimes be found at supper with the wealthy, vivacious Sophie Arnould, the famous singer, whose prematurely impaired voice made the wit cruelly say of her performance, that "he

had never heard a finer asthma." Often he was at the rooms of St Pierre, where we see him going in a round, well-powdered, well-curled wig, in a complete dress of nankeen, his hat under his arm, his little cane in his hand. He liked at the *café* to discuss music with Gluck and Grétry, who were at last convincing him that music could be wedded to French words. At the houses of his aristocratic friends he gave readings of his 'Confessions' (in 1770-71), until Madame d'Epinay, knowing the too frank details about herself, got the police to stop the performances. But it must not be forgotten that he never spoke evil in conversation, even of his enemies, in those days. He was still afraid of compromising his independence, and too often requited kindness with suspicion and jealousy. It was not always pleasant or safe to be too familiar with this Timon of Paris, for in a moment the sweet expression of eye and mouth could become distrustful and angry. When St Pierre sent him some fine coffee he had brought from abroad, he got this stinging answer: "We hardly know each other, and you begin by presents. This is to render our intercourse too unequal. Choose either to take back your coffee, or that we shall see each other no more." And his friend was obliged in return to accept a foreign plant and a book on ichthyology, for which he had no possible need. One day his acquaintance, Rulhière, called. Rousseau received him coldly, and went on copying, saying, "I must live by my work;" but the visitor still remained, seating himself by the fire. Suddenly Rousseau turned to him with his glittering eyes, and said, with sharp voice: "M. de Rulhière, you have come to find out what I have got in my pot. Very well, I shall gratify your curiosity.

There are two pounds of meat, a carrot, an onion, flavoured with clove." M. de Rulhière did not, on the whole, enjoy his visit. We have pity for poor Madame de Latour, who, enamoured of the author of 'Julie,' had, without ever seeing him, except on one short interview, been his favourite correspondent for ten years. Many were the loving letters he had exchanged with "dear Marianne," much affection for her he had expressed, often he had desired to see her face, and she had bravely pleaded for him when society condemned him; now when she heard he was in Paris, she climbed with beating heart the stairs of the Rue Platrière to meet her beloved friend. To her dismay, when she introduced herself again, he would hardly see her, churlishly spoke to her, and cruelly wrote: "It does not suit me to remain in intercourse with any whose character and relationship I do not know well. Of all my correspondents, you are the most exacting, the one of whom I know least, and the one who has enlightened me least on the matters which I care to know. That has determined me to break off an intercourse which has become burdensome to me, and the true motive of which on your part I may miss." Poor Madame de Latour! her whole heart was Rousseau's, and he flung it away.

Rousseau hated the streets of Paris, which he felt hard as the hearts of his friends. He loved to walk in the suburbs, to note from Mont Valérien the rich sunsets, to watch the leaves of the trees change with the changing seasons, and to listen dreamily to the songs of the birds. Two leagues a-day the recluse went to Berci during spring to hear the nightingale in perfection; for being a very epicure in his sensuous feelings, he tells

us the water, the verdure, the solitude, the woods, were needed to make the song touch his heart. Whenever he entered the country, his whole countenance changed, and became bright and serene. "I have told my wife," he said, walking with St Pierre, "'when you see me very ill, and not likely to recover, get me carried to a meadow, and you will find me well again.'"

In his latest years he devoted little time to literature. In 1772, by request, he wrote his 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,'—a country then in political anarchy, and, as he shrewdly saw, near its end; and during four years he composed in some of his bitterest moments 'Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques,' a marvellous composition, in which, in dialogue with an imaginary "Frenchman," he discusses the vices and virtues of "Jean Jacques" as a third party, defending him from the atrocious charges which he believed were brought against him, in order to vindicate his maligned character in the eyes of posterity. These Dialogues are full of wild, insane suspicions against men,—full of the notion that every one insulted him, that he was watched by spies in every *café*, and had been mocked in every honour of late years shown him,—in London, at Amiens, and by the Prince de Conti. And yet in this extraordinary work there is remarkable self-portraiture, and most acute analysis of his own character. The author describes himself such as the world views him to-day, as a man who seldom in his conduct acted from sense of duty, but blindly followed his inclinations; who would form in his room noble and beautiful resolutions which vanished before he reached the street; gifted with sluggish thoughts and lively imagination; living in the present

and forgetting the past, and without care for the future. As if believing everything connected with himself must be of profound interest to the world and to future ages, he gives the minutest traits of his character,—of his irresolute, laborious laziness; even how he will correct his manuscript with incredible pains rather than resolve to begin a new page, scraping and rescraping till the page is in pieces.

These Dialogues, with their half-insane exposure of the injuries he imagined he was receiving from man, and their proclamation of his own innocence, he regarded as the true vindication of himself to posterity; and his anxiety, when he finished them in 1776, was to prevent their malicious suppression by his enemies. He conceived a strange device. He prepared a copy of the precious document, and sought an opportunity of putting it on the altar in Notre Dame, fancying by this means it would be brought before the king. On some Saturday when the choir was empty, he thought he could unseen lay his sacred parcel. He inscribed on the manuscript a prayer to God, beginning, "Receive this deposit, confided to Thy providence by a stranger, unfortunate, lonely, without support, outraged, mocked, defamed, betrayed by a whole generation." We see him on Saturday, 24th February 1776, coming anxiously to Notre Dame to leave his manuscript, and stepping stealthily on his way from pillar to pillar in the long aisles. Suddenly, to his dismay, he discovered that, in the railing dividing the choir from the nave, the gate was shut, which for thirty-six years he had never seen before. Horror-struck, he wildly rushed out

of the church, feeling that God had joined with man in the conspiracy against him, and wandered till darkness and fatigue drove him home. He next wrote a strange circular address to the French nation against the cruel wrongs done to his name, and made many copies, to distribute to persons he met in the streets. He addressed it "To every Frenchman loving justice and truth," fancying none could refuse a paper with such a flattering title. "But all," he says, "after having read the address, declared, with an ingenuousness which made me laugh in spite of my sorrow, that it was not addressed to them. 'You are right,' said I to them, taking it back; 'I see very well I am mistaken.' Here was the only honest speech which for fifteen years I had got from the mouth of any Frenchman."[1]

In his latest years he gave up copying music. He became feebler, and he became poorer. He took only water at his scanty meals, not thinking himself able to afford the cheapest wine. In this situation, in May 1777 he drew up a memorial stating his condition, and begging that he and Thérèse might be received into a hospital. They would be content, he urged, with the simplest clothing and the most frugal fare, on condition of having no trouble, and would surrender his income of 1400 francs. But if he was poor, he was wilfully so, for he only drew George III.'s pension for one year, and even angrily destroyed the draft when an officious friend got 7000 francs of arrears due to him—for he hated money got through his enemy Hume. Meanwhile, the old delusions were becoming stronger and more persistent

[1] In his postscript to the Dialogues.

than ever. Sometimes in the dusk, as he strolled in the suburbs, he would chat with the children whom he met, kissing and loading with *bonbons* those who made friends with him; but if any person passed by, he at once feared he was being followed, and darted in terror under the shadow of a house. When he heard of the death of Louis XV., in 1774, he exclaimed, "Ah, God, how sorry I am!" "Why?" he was asked. "Ah, because he shared the hatred which the nation has sworn against me, and now I must bear it alone." Yet as we read his 'Rêveries du Promeneur solitaire,' composed in the last two years of his life, it is easy to see that his mind had its peaceful hours and calm thoughts, for none of his writings contain more beautiful passages, none more delicate in tone, none more rich in style, which linger long on both ear and memory. Besides remarkable studies of his own character, they sparkle with lovely scenes, admirable, vivid, and picturesque, such as the exquisite description of the life on the isle of St Pierre, written in moods of serenity.

Poor Jean Jacques had his quiet happy days—days when all enemies were forgotten. Though unable to go far in his country rambles now, he had delight in arranging his plants, the trophies of the past, for to every one a happy memory clung; and as he handled the tiny withered leaves, his mind was carried away to lovely scenes, to forests, rocks, and mountains dear to his heart; or when he played on the harpsichord, and sang till his eyes filled with tears, all evil things vanished, and he was happy in his reveries. "Consumed," he one day wrote, "by an incurable malady, which draws me by

slow degrees to the grave, I often turn an eye of interest towards the career I quit, and without moaning over its close, I would gladly begin it anew. Meanwhile, what have I experienced during that space that deserves my attachment? Dependence, errors, vain desires, poverty, infirmities of every kind, short pleasures, prolonged griefs, real evils and shadowy blessings. Ah! without doubt to live is a beautiful thing, since a life so unfortunate leaves me so many regrets." But whenever his thoughts reverted to the present, he was miserable again. He believed that the populace of Paris had been incited against him, and burned him in effigy; he feared to leave his house lest he should be stoned; and he fancied all Europe eyed him as a dangerous monster

M. de Girardin in 1778 offered Rousseau a pretty rustic cottage on his beautiful property of Ermonenville, twenty miles from Paris. Before he left for ever the Rue Platrière (now called Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau), the city was *fêting* Voltaire, who, after an exile of twenty-six years, had returned in his old age in triumph, amidst the enthusiasm of the people, only to die in a few months exhausted with glory. The theatres were nightly crowded with applauding audiences, when his plays were performed in his presence; his rooms were buzzing with *his* noble courtiers; and the streets were thronged with eager crowds as he passed,—all forgetting poor Jean Jacques in his dingy garret. In the tranquil, beautiful woods and gardens of Ermonenville, Rousseau was at last happy for a while, amusing himself with his old pursuits, and by teaching his host's son. Only a

few weeks passed, however, before Rousseau's misery began again: he felt himself surrounded by enemies and dogged by spies. He asked a friend to get him into a hospital. Thérèse, always base, was now vicious; and her inclination for a groom on the estate is said to have embittered the old man's last days.[1] He tried to flee, but had no money. All was ended on July 2, 1778, when he died with startling suddenness. The surgeons, who made a *post-mortem* examination, asserted he had died of apoplexy, while rumours told that he had committed suicide, some saying he had poisoned himself, others that he had shot himself. Madame de Staël has said she saw letters to his friend Moultou, announcing his intention of shortening his life; and passages in the 'New Héloïse,' and in private correspondence, seeming to justify such an act, were remembered, though others quite as strong can certainly be quoted condemning it. Though the evidence of M. de Girardin seems to afford distinct testimony that his death was natural, over that end mystery and suspicion will for ever hang. Before he died he said to his wife: "You weep then at my happiness—eternal happiness, which men no more can disturb? I die in peace: I never wished harm to any one, and I can rely on the mercy of God."[2] Death, by whatever means attained, was to the old man a release, for he longed for that time when the wicked would cease to trouble him, and his weary

[1] Thérèse, after Rousseau's death, lived at Plessis-Belleville, near Ermonenville, and died July 17, 1801.

[2] Letter from Girardin to Rey of Amsterdam. Gaberel's Rousseau et les Genevois, p. 145.

heart would be at rest. By the moonlight of a still summer night, the body of Rousseau was silently borne in a boat to the islet in the little lake of Ermonenville, and buried amongst the tall poplar-trees—lying in death amid that solitude he had loved during life. There his body lay in peace, till during the Revolution in noisy triumph it was borne to Paris and placed in the Pantheon.

END OF ROUSSEAU.

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